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EXCLUSIVE

The truth about **MARY BELL**

THE MAN WHO TAUGHT HER RIGHT AND WRONG

32 PAGES OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES

2 SECTIONS

First interview with **Superman**

How we kept our love alive **CHRISTOPHER REEVE**

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Dobson campaigns to cut legal costs

Lawyers 'are milking NHS of millions'

By Ian Murray and Frances Gibb

FRANK DOBSON yesterday accused lawyers of milking the health service of money needed to treat patients, as he launched a campaign to cut the steadily growing cost of medical litigation.

"As far as I am concerned, the best place for a lawyer in the NHS is on the operating table, not sliding around causing trouble for other people," the Health Secretary told the Royal College of Midwives.

"We see the situation in the USA where people are not concerned with what is best for the mother and baby but are thinking 'How would this look in court?'" Mr Dobson has written to a wide range of organisations including many which have made claims against the health service - seeking ideas on how to stop disgruntled patients rushing to law.

Litigation had cost the health service £235 million in 1996-97, a 17 per cent increase over the previous year, he said. "Every pound that is spent in the courtroom is a pound not spent on patient care. We must do everything we can to keep lawyers out of hospitals and keep the doctors, midwives and other health professionals out of court so they can concentrate on their patients."

Mr Dobson's assessment of the growth in medical litigation was supported by annual figures released by the Medical Defence Union yesterday, which showed a 15 per cent increase in the number of cases and a similar rise in the amount paid in damages. The MDU paid £48 million in compensation and £11 million in costs last year, while the Medical Protection Society - both organisations have



"We need to operate - you seem to be heartless"

advertising and putting ideas into patients' heads. If communication is not right from the beginning, the temptation is to run off and see a solicitor."

But lawyers reacted angrily to Mr Dobson's remarks. Philip Sycamore, president of the Law Society, said: "The obvious point to make is that the best way to avoid claims is not to be negligent in the first place." However, accidents did happen and that brought people to solicitors, he said. Much litigation could be avoided if hospitals dealt with complaints properly from the start. What most people want is an explanation of what happened, an apology and an assurance that something similar will not re-occur.

Law firms specialising in medical negligence insisted that they were not "ambulance chasers" and confirmed Dr Tomkins's view that two thirds of cases were abandoned. David Body, head of medical negligence at Irwin Mitchell of Sheffield, invited Mr Dobson to go and see for himself how his firm chose and prepared claims. "We are at the forefront of promoting risk management by hospitals, advising them how to avoid claims in the first place."

And he questioned why, if Mr Dobson was concerned about public money being squandered on litigation, claims were not settled faster - for example those from people who contracted Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease from growth hormones. Such cases had been settled as a matter of government policy in France and Australia, but two years after the trial, the last hearings in Britain were only just finishing.



The Queen with Michael Caine, Shirley Bassey and Joan Collins at Windsor Castle last night during her first party just for the arts world

Queen throws a Cool Britannia party

By Andrew Pierce and Dalia Albergé

ROYAL FAMILY favourites Shirley Bassey and Joan Collins mixed with the new generation of showbusiness talent who partied with the Queen at Windsor Castle last night. Euan MacGregor and Robert Carlyle, two of the most sought-after British stars in Hollywood, led the "Cool Britannia" brigade.

Mick Hucknail, the lead singer of Simply Red who is a member of the Government's creative industries task force, flew the flag for the pop industry amid the gothic splendour of the newly-restored St George's Hall. Buckingham Palace officials went out of their way last night to deny that the monarchy had embraced the Cool Britannia concept pioneered by Tony Blair. But the 650-strong guest list could have been written by the Prime

Minister who has been seeking to modernise the appeal of the monarchy. Many of the guests were Mr Blair's friends who had been to similar gatherings at Downing Street.

In the past the Queen's greatest exposure to showbusiness was behind the scenes of the Royal Variety show where she regularly met the likes of Sir Harry Secombe, Morecambe and Wise, and Dana.

But it was the presence of Euan MacGregor, star of the drugs cult film *Trainspotting*, and Robert Carlyle, the unshuffled lead man of *The Full Monty*, which underlined a change of style with past royal receptions.

Only last month a pop band, Camp House, became the first to perform live behind the walls of Buckingham Palace. Last night's reception was the

first at the castle since the disastrous fire of 1992 and the first the Queen has held exclusively for the stars of soap, stage, screen and the arts world.

The Gallagher brothers from Oasis, and Eddie Izzard, the cross-dressing comic, wooed by new Labour were conspicuous by their absence. But many other rising stars such as Tara Fitzgerald, who was in *Brassed Off*, Hugh Laurie, and Paul McCann, were present. Other guests included Ruth Rendell, and David Putnam, ennobled by Mr Blair; Victoria Wood, the comedienne, Robbie Coltrane and Billy Connolly, whose stand-up comedy act is the despair of the censors.

Royal courtiers conceded last night that they could not recall such a guest list at the castle. Joan Collins, Joanna Lumley, Dawn French, Beryl Bainbridge and Wendy Richard from *EastEnders* attended along with Kenneth Branagh, the filmmaker, Sir George Martin, the producer of the Beatles, and Sir Cameron Mackintosh, the impresario.

Poets, dancers, painters and fashion designers jostled for a chance to talk to the Queen along with arts administrators. Only one politician was present. Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, who is one of the keenest proponents of "Cool Britannia".

The style and dress code was informal: lounge suits and cocktail dresses. There was no formal line-up of guests to meet the hosts, which has characterised other royal gatherings. The two-hour reception was deliberately low-key. "The Queen just mingles," an official said.

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Tooth filling fear for pregnancies

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

PREGNANT women were advised last night not to have or to remove amalgam tooth fillings. Robin Wild, the Chief Dental Officer, said there was a possible risk that vapour from mercury, used in the fillings with silver, copper and tin, could damage unborn children.

The advice was issued by the Health Department after the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) decided it was prudent for pregnant women to avoid treatment involving amalgam fillings to make it impossible for mercury to get into the foetus.

COT, which last investigated the safety of amalgam in 1986, said it had no evidence that there was a risk from the substances which had been in use for 150 years. There had been cases of hypersensitivity to mercury from fillings, but no record of poisoning.

Mary Bell's daughter of 14 learns who her mother is

By Richard Ford and Stephen Farrell

MARY BELL'S teenage daughter discovered her mother's true identity as a double child killer for the first time in the early hours of yesterday.

Bell and her 14-year-old daughter were moved from their home on the Sussex coast after reporters besieged their home. Until then, the Court of Session in Edinburgh was told, the child had no inkling of her mother's previous life. The disclosure was made as Northumberland County Council sought an order extending the ban on publication of Bell's new identity to Scotland.

The court hearing came as the Prime Minister joined the Bell for collaborating on a book about her life. Tony Blair said it was "inherently repugnant" that people should make money out of terrible crimes and indicated that the law could be tightened to prevent a similar case in the future. It was "plain wrong" that Bell should receive money for helping to write a book about her crimes.

John Morris, QC, the Attorney-General, is investigating whether payment to Bell could be blocked. Acting in his capacity as protector of the public interest, he has consulted counsel to see if a Court of Appeal ruling last December which barred the spy George Blake from receiving £90,000 royalties from the sale of his memoirs could be used in the Bell case.

Tory voters give Blair approval

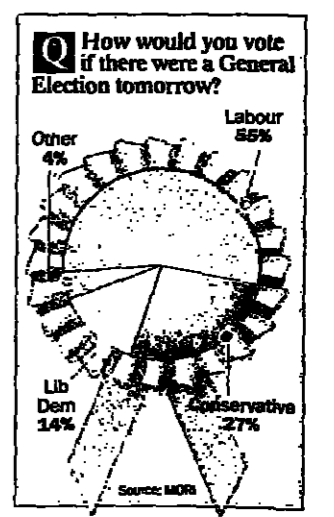
By Peter Riddell

CONSERVATIVE supporters rate Tony Blair more highly than William Hague, their own leader, according to a MORI poll for *The Times*.

The survey, undertaken last weekend, shows the Blair Government continuing to enjoy near-record ratings on its first anniversary, while Mr Hague's Tories languish with few signs of recovery.

Labour's rating is 55 per cent, two points up on the past month and the highest this year. The Tories are down a point at 27 per cent, while the Liberal Democrats are unchanged on 14 per cent. This represents a 7.5 per cent swing to Labour since the general election.

Mr Blair's personal net rating, measuring those satisfied with the way he is doing his job, has improved from plus 34 to plus 46 points. Even Tory supporters are roughly evenly divided (45 per cent satisfied;



46 per cent dissatisfied) about his merits as Prime Minister, while they have a negative view of Mr Hague as their leader (38 to 45 per cent).

MORI interviewed a representative quota sample of 1,926 adults face-to-face at 164 sampling points across Britain on April 24-27. Data were weighted to match the profile of the population and voting intention figures exclude those who say they would not vote (9 per cent), are undecided (5 per cent) or who refused to say (1 per cent).

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Head prefect can't resist chance to kick shins in playground

Maybe we should abandon Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons and try the Internet. Onscreen, Tony Blair's constant playground taunts would surely cease. On his feet the Prime Minister returns like an addict to his need to tell us what is wrong with the other guy.

Some, as they grow more secure, relax. Others get meaner. For one who has had a more successful first year at Downing Street than any Prime Minister in living memory — pledged to end

Punch and Judy politics and facing a toothless Opposition — it is astonishing with what venom Mr Blair returns to attack the last Government.

Like an itch he cannot resist scratching, the very existence of a Conservative Party nestles him. There is an ungenerosity that is hard to square with other aspects of his character and belief.

That Anne McGuire (Lab, Sterling) should have been moved (or prompted) to use Question 1 to take a swipe at the candidate she beat on May 1, is her choice. Nobody

wanted the Tories back, she said. One could hardly expect Blair to disagree.

That William Hague's complaint about mounting NHS waiting lists should provoke the Prime Minister into an attack on the Conservative record was understandable.

That (at Question 2) a positive pitch from Ian Pearson (Lab, Dudley S) on hopes for a successful euro, should trigger another assault by the Prime Minister on the Tories ("Tory policy was a mess before the election; it's a catastrophe now") was puzzling but, his position being uncertain, maybe it was safer to attack Hague's.

That Tony Colman's Question 4 (the Labour MP for Putney asked the Prime Minister "to confirm that parents should vote Labour on May 7") should nudge Blair into attacking the educational record of Tory councils, was, you may say, no more than

standard electioneering. But when John Butterfill (C, Bournemouth W) asked how long the Government planned to take in evaluating the euro, Mr Blair's renewed attack on the Conservative Party began to sound obsessive.

Who cares how long the Tories take? And we were still only nine minutes into Mr Blair's half hour. Odd to

spend so much of an anniversary celebration kicking shins.

On the next question, a friendly one, the Prime Minister managed a sneer at William Hague's Internet appearance under the banner of "meet your heroes, live" — along with the Wombles, said Blair.

A question from Hague about Rupert Murdoch's strike-breaking at Wapping in 1986 (Blair avoided answering) brought another attack on Tory attitudes. Hague repeated his question. Blair

grew angry. "If there's any brain left in the Opposition," he said, "it's time they made it up."

Lawrie Quinn (Lab, Scarborough & Whitby) congratulated him on grants for rural bus companies. Blair said these were "to repair Tory damage".

Nigel Waterson (C, Eastbourne) asked about threats to disability living allowance. Blair said it was the Tories who had most harmed the disabled.

How much longer would the Prime Minister keep this

up? John Swinney (SNP, N Tayside) asked about BSE. This was a "mess the Tories left us", Blair said.

Finally, Rhodri Morgan (Lab, Cardiff W) praised Labour's devolution plans. Mr Blair's response? A scathing attack on "Tory U-turns".

Then, with seconds to spare before the end and perhaps mindful that the mask of St Francis had slipped, the Prime Minister made a late bid for consensus. He welcomed these U-turns, he said. It was the most inclusive thing he said all afternoon.



MATTHEW PARRIS POLITICAL SKETCH

Mary Bell

Continued from page 1
Sussex Police said: "There are an awful lot of injunctions around Mary Bell, or whatever she is now known as, to protect the daughter, so we cannot comment on her or her whereabouts."

Yesterday the Official Solicitor extended the order barring the identification of Bell's daughter to Scotland. But Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said: "It's certainly the case that Mary Bell, by bringing herself into the public arena in such a dramatic way, has compromised her own claim for her own privacy."

Shops were urged yesterday not to stock Ms Sereny's book and a protest will be held in Newcastle upon Tyne city centre on Saturday. Among those taking part will be June Richardson, whose son Martin Brown was one of Bell's victims. She said: "I had actually stopped hating her and now this hate is returning because she is now hurting my family." She blamed Ms Sereny for "dangling a carrot" in front of Bell.

In today's extract in *The Times*, Bell says that since her own daughter was born she has thought daily about the two children she killed and the pain she caused their parents.

She says: "Especially on happy days, there's always something that pulls me up, stops me when I think what I robbed them of... bringing their children up. It never goes. It'll never go away and why should it?"

"I thought about it before, too, but since I've had (my child) it's become oh, so much, much more painful. Before, I would think of it just as an adult you know rather than a parent. Then, too, I would feel sad, but not the incredible sadness I feel now."

Blair supports Dutch choice for Central Bank

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

TONY BLAIR has thrown Britain's weight behind Germany and The Netherlands in their feud with France to ensure a full eight-year term for a Dutchman to head the European Central Bank, senior Labour sources said yesterday.

As current chairman of the EU council, Mr Blair is striving to craft a compromise in the dispute, which is shaking market confidence in the euro and threatens to spoil a summit in Brussels on Saturday that will give the go-ahead to an 11-nation single currency and set up the independent bank to run it.

Germany and The Netherlands, backed by most states, want the job to go to Wim Duisenberg, the Dutch head of the European Monetary Institute. But President Chirac is pushing for the appointment of Jean-Claude Trichet, governor of the Banque de France. Britain, as a non-participant in the euro, has no vote in the choice of the bank board, but a stalemate at the key EU event this year would blot Britain's record during its six-month presidency of the EU.

Earlier this week, Mr Blair was sounding out fellow leaders over a compromise that would split the eight-year

term, allowing Mr Duisenberg, 63, to start in the office and hand over to M Trichet after four. However, as resistance to such a "fudge" has grown in Northern Europe this week, Downing Street has told the European Parliament that it opposes a split term, the Labour sources said. British officials in Brussels said last night that the Government wanted an agreement that was in keeping with the Maastricht treaty. It stipulates an eight-year term for the central bank chief.

Diplomats expect an effort to help M Chirac to save face. M Trichet may be appointed vice-president of the bank and France would be given promises that it would receive other senior EU posts, including the new presidency of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Members of a key committee of the European parliament, which will vet the ECB team, made clear yesterday that it would reject any deal, even a "gentleman's agreement" which split the presidency term.

A gentleman's agreement is being cited by France partly to justify its campaign for M Trichet. The late President Mitterrand said: "Chancellor Kohl had promised that the

ECB job would go to a Frenchman in return for his approval of Frankfurt as the seat of the bank. Although M Trichet is an orthodox central banker, his candidature is seen in Northern Europe as France's bid to ensure a degree of political control at the ECB. Chancellor Kohl, his back to the political wall at home, is fiercely fighting to shore up German support for the euro by ensuring that the central bank is run on the stern anti-inflationist lines of the Bundesbank.

Sirkka Haemaalaainen, governor of the Finnish bank, has been suggested as a compromise. However, the Germans and Dutch are adamant that this will not happen.

The Prime Minister yesterday rejected calls to declare an intention to join the European single currency as a way of bringing down the value of the pound.

The Commons Treasury committee had warned that it would be impossible to judge the success or otherwise of the single currency for at least five years from its launch date. But Mr Blair said that he "could not think of a worse reason for joining the euro than simply for the short term by bringing down the value of the pound".



Margaret McDonagh, who is expected to become the first woman general secretary of the Labour Party, succeeding Tom Sawyer, who is to stand down after four years in the job. Ms McDonagh, 36, is currently Mr Sawyer's deputy

Brothers held over Mardi Gra bombings

BY STEWART TENDLER CRIME CORRESPONDENT

TWO brothers in their sixties were questioned yesterday by detectives investigating attacks by the "Mardi Gra" bomber on branches of Barclays Bank and Sainsbury's stores across West and South London.

The arrests were made as officers raided addresses in Chiswick, West London, and seized a cache of home-made devices. The seizure was made at the culmination of a highly secret investigation launched by the Yard's anti-terrorist branch and organised crime group, with more than 200 surveillance officers.

Police said the two men were being questioned about allegations of demanding money with menaces, explosives offences and using firearms with intent to endanger life: all the Mardi Gra devices were made with shotgun cartridges. A third suspect arrested during the raids was released on police bail and is not being linked to the Mardi Gra attacks.

Detectives now believe that the 36 bombings were not only propelled by grudges, but were a deliberate and calculated attempt to extort cash using terrorist methods.

Police were believed to have secretly opened negotiations with the bomber some months ago.

Two men were charged last night in connection with the bombings.

THE TIMES 'Inform

Life case with an McGuinn

Lery winner... used £1m to... juggle drugs

Dirty rats have... laugh on human

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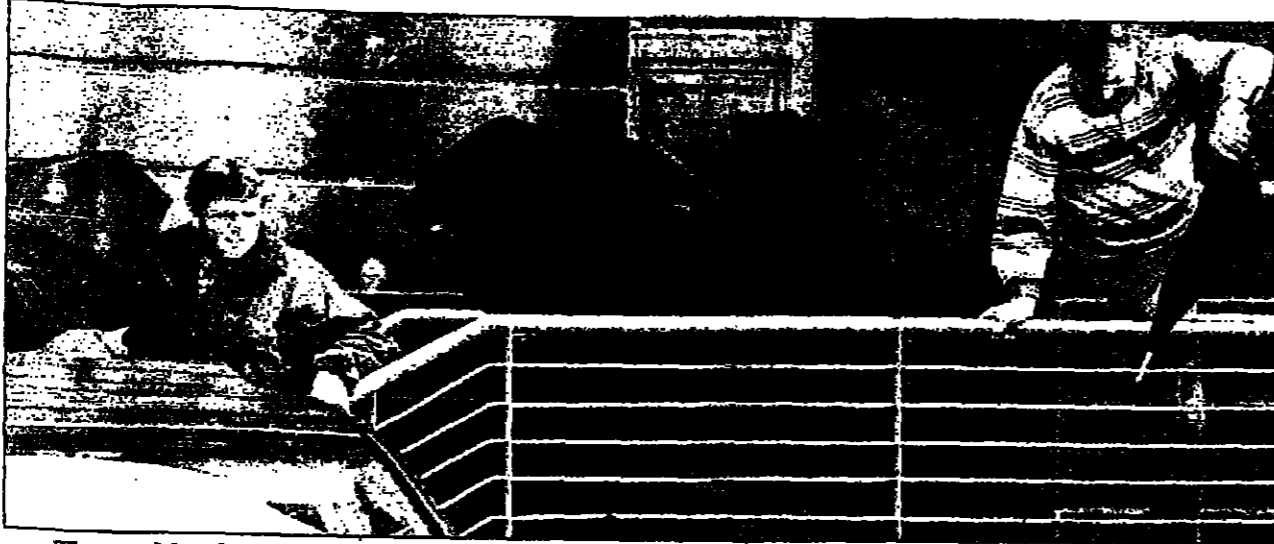
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'Informer' names leading IRA members



Thomas Murphy and his brother cover their heads as they leave the court. Mr Murphy is suing for libel

Libel case witness identifies Adams and McGuinness as senior officers

BY AUDREY MAGEE
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER IRA member was arrested in Dublin yesterday after dramatically identifying one of his former colleagues in a Dublin court and testifying that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were senior officers.

Sean O'Callaghan was taken into custody for questioning about the murder of an IRA informer in 1985 only minutes after giving a stunned courtroom what he said were details of IRA membership and *modus operandi*.

Mr O'Callaghan said that leading Sinn Fein figures in the current peace talks, including Mr Adams, Mr McGuinness, Pat Doherty and Martin Ferris were all senior IRA members. He alleged that some, like Mr McGuinness, held senior positions

on the inner Army Council, which planned bombing campaigns and met in secret locations around Ireland.

Mr O'Callaghan, 43, was a key witness in a case involving *The Sunday Times* and Thomas Murphy, a Co Louth farmer who claims he was libelled by the paper in June 1985. The feature-length article "Portrait of a check-in terrorist", said that the IRA had appointed "Slab" Murphy, a farmer living on the southern side of the Irish border in Co Louth, as Officer in Command of IRA operations in Northern Ireland. The paper said Mr Murphy controlled operations in Northern Ireland from a safe base in the Republic.

Mr Murphy, who appeared in court on the first day of the trial yesterday, said that he was deeply offended by the article because his neighbours

believed he was the person referred to in it and it had severely damaged his reputation.

Kevin Feeney, for the *The Sunday Times*, told the jury of eight women and four men that they would hear "unique"

afternoon and gave what he said were details of his involvement with the IRA, which he claimed he had first joined as a boy of 15. He said he gradually moved up the ranks, helping to kill a woman member of the Ulster



Sean O'Callaghan, centre, outside the High Court in Dublin yesterday after the arrest following his evidence

Pat Doherty said 'How are we going to win the war?' Tom Murphy said 'Bomb them to the table and then booby-trap the table.'

testimony from Mr O'Callaghan, who, he said, was a former IRA member turned informer who knew Mr Murphy and twice met him at top-level IRA meetings. Mr O'Callaghan took the stand for two hours yesterday

than against the British army. He returned four years later, he said, this time as an informer for the Gardaí. He told the jury that he was elevated to Officer in Command of the Southern Command, giving access to the inner sanctum of the IRA.

He said he met "Slab" Murphy first in June or July 1983 at a top-secret meeting of the Revolutionary Council, a think-tank convened to decide on the future direction of the Republican movement. He alleged that Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness were at the meeting.

Then he pointed across the courtroom floor at Mr Murphy — a balding man dressed in a tie and grey leather jacket — and said that he also met him there.

Mr O'Callaghan told the jury that he met Mr Murphy a second time at a meeting of the

Army Council of the IRA. He told the court: "Pat Doherty sort of made an introduction saying 'How are we going to win the war?' and Tom Murphy said 'Bomb them to the conference table and then booby trap the table'."

Then Pat Doherty said "What about the Sinn Fein delegation?" and Tom Murphy said "We never tell people where we are putting booby traps."

Mr O'Callaghan alleged that Mr Murphy was Officer in Command of the Northern brigade and very proud of the brutality of his force.

Last night Mr O'Callaghan was questioned by Gardaí in Dublin in connection with the murder in Cork in 1985 of John Corcoran, an IRA informer. It is expected that he will be free to resume his testimony in the libel trial when it resumes in Dublin on Tuesday.

THE NAMED MEN

Sean O'Callaghan gave the names of people he said had attended meetings of two separate organisations. According to his testimony, the following were at a meeting of the IRA Revolutionary Council near Charlestown, Co Mayo, in June or July, 1983:

Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness, Pat Doherty, Danny Morrison, Joe Koolhane, Tom Murphy, Martin Ferris, John Noonan, Tommy Devereaux, JP McDonald.

He also named ten people, including Tom Murphy, who he said had attended meetings of the IRA Army Council between October 1984 and July 1985:

Kevin McKenna (Chief of Staff), Pat Doherty (Adjutant General), Martin McGuinness (overseer of operations), Tom Murphy (officer in charge of Northern Command), Sean O'Callaghan (officer in charge of Southern Command), Seamus Toomey (director of intelligence), John Deery (director of finance), Eoin Coogan (director of England), Claran Conway (director of research), Gabriel Cleary (director of engineering) and Danny Morrison (director of publicity).

The IRA Revolutionary Council is the IRA "think-tank". The Army Council is the IRA's inner sanctum and is responsible for planning bombing campaigns and shootings.

Lottery winner's son 'used £1m to smuggle drugs'

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

THE son of a £6.6 million lottery winner used some of his share of his father's winnings to help to set up a £1 million international drug smuggling operation. Manchester Crown Court was told yesterday.

Richard White, 34, from Glazebury, near Warrington, had the "good fortune" to be given £1 million by his father Ken, 66, shortly after the win in May 1995, which he invested in his own road haulage business. He was a key member in a seven-man gang that smuggled 303 blocks of cannabis resin worth £1.25 million it is alleged.

Mr White sat in the dock alongside Anthony Toby, 35, from Smithfield, Manchester, and Peter Jemmett, 47, from Worsley, Greater Manchester. Each denied conspiring to smuggle cannabis resin between September 1996 and April 1997. The jury was told that four other men had already admitted the charge.

Alistair Webster, QC, for the prosecution, said that Customs and Excise officers had followed the activities of the alleged gang for several months. They tracked the trailer, driven by one of the alleged gang's "foot soldiers",

as it arrived in Portsmouth from Bilbao, in Spain, with a lorry load of onions.

Once the onions had been offloaded, the lorry belonging to Mr White's company, JP Plant Ltd, was driven to Wainstley Farm, in Leigh, near Warrington. Customs officers swooped as the drugs were being extracted from the compartment. Mr Webster said that those who had already pleaded guilty were caught virtually "red handed".

He said that Mr White and the two others were co-conspirators involved in the planning of the operation.

Mr Toby was the "controlling mind", said Mr Webster. He had access to £1 million in a Swiss bank account transferred from Hong Kong. He added that it was one of Mr White's trailers, specially adapted with a false bulkhead, that was used to pick up the drugs in Spain before being driven back to Britain.

Mr Webster said: "Of course, if somebody innocently leases out a vehicle during the course of his legitimate business to people who, without his knowledge, convert it and use it for the purpose of drug importation, that person is not guilty of an offence."

"The Crown say that is far from being the case here. Mr White was a knowing participant in this scheme."

Trackers reveal that waders really fly

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY

THE ability of migrating birds to cover thousands of miles at high speeds has been proved for the first time in tests conducted by British and American scientists.

Three different types of waders flew distances ranging from 930 miles to 2,795 miles at average speeds of up to 30mph, in some cases without stopping. The scientists fitted the birds with short-range radio tags that emitted signals with a frequency unique to each bird. This made it possible to locate and identify the birds on arrival.

Most remarkable of all, according to a report in the monthly magazine *British Birds*, were Pacific golden plovers, close cousins of the golden plovers that breed on British moorland. With no land to rest on, the fastest bird flew 2,795 miles across the Pacific Ocean, from wintering sites in Hawaii to spring staging areas in Alaska, in 90 hours, an average speed of 31 mph.

A sandpiper measured on its migration from Teeside to Iceland covered 930 miles in 41 hours, a speed of 23 mph. Western sandpipers took 185 hours to fly just over 2,000 miles from San Francisco Bay to Alaska, an average speed of 11 mph. The fastest human marathon was run at 12.4 mph.

Dirty rats have the last laugh on human friends

BY NICK NUTTALL

NOT only will rats leave a sinking ship — they'll probably have a jolly good laugh as they go. Scientists have found evidence that giggling and guffawing may be far more widespread in the animal kingdom than was previously supposed.

The researchers studying the rodents decided to tickle them to see if they could stimulate anything resembling the panting sounds akin to human laughter. Documented in chimpanzees and mented in primates. Previous other primates-like evidence of laughter-like noises in other mammals was vague and largely anecdotal.

The researchers found that the rats responded by emitting shrieks of ultrasonic chirps and whistles. These chirps, outside the range of frequencies audible to the



Roland Rat: in real life rodents may also laugh

human ear, have been detected before. But most researchers thought they were linked with a distress signal, aggression or a prelude to sex.

The scientists, based at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, found that the chirps were also emitted by young rats when playing vigorous rough and tumble games. They also chirp more

than older relatives when tickled. Jaak Panksepp, one of the team, says in *New Scientist* that the experiments appear to show a "primal form of laughter" that evolved before primates.

The scientists think that animals may use laughter to distinguish between playful and threatening physical interactions. Dr Panksepp says: "We'd be surprised if rats have a sense of humour but they clearly have a sense of fun." He argues that laughter in humans is triggered in evolutionary ancient regions of the brain and is hardly a cerebral activity.

Robert Provine, a laughter researcher at the University of Maryland, tells the magazine that social mammals like rats probably do produce laughter-like sounds. But believes it may be an act of faith to equate them to human mirth.

Microsoft OFFICE 97

PALMIST JANE LEVY USES HER RIGHT HAND TO PREDICT HER BUSINESS FUTURE.

Jane Levy has been a palmist for over twenty years. In that time, she's used her gift to predict the future for thousands of customers. However, when her own financial future was proving a little harder to see, she sought enlightenment by contacting Microsoft.

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APRIL 30 1998

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John Swinney (SNP) ... Blair said ... Rhodri Morgan ...

Brothers held over ... Lardi Gra ... bombings

BY STEWART TUNBER ... RIML CORPUS ...

Bell deserves sympathy, says author's agent

THE distinguished literary agent Hilary Rubinstein has defended his decision to act for Mary Bell in helping to produce the book about her life. He said he had met Ms Bell, whom he found to be a "resilient but vulnerable" person who was deserving of sympathy. Mr Rubinstein admitted that he had never been involved in a book that had produced such controversy. "I have not known anything like this in 33 years as an agent," he said.

The campaign group Mothers Against Murder and Aggression is trying to persuade shops not to stock the book. Managers at Dillons, Waterstone's and Bookworld stores in Newcastle upon Tyne said that no decision had been made about whether the book would be put on sale. Mr Rubinstein made no apology for his role in negotiating the agreement under which Ms Bell was paid for collaborating with the author Gitta Sereny in her book *Cries Unheard*. He disclosed that he was approached some years ago by Ms Bell's probation officer and lawyer and asked to represent her. Ms Bell attempted to write an autobiography, which a publisher was willing to publish, but Ms

Child killer spurned the chance to earn far more from tabloids, reports Richard Ford

Bell decided against pursuing the matter. Mr Rubinstein said that although there were hundreds of convicted murderers alive, only who had become household names. "Myra Hindley and Mary Bell have, more than any others, been branded for life with the mark of Cain. Thanks to Gitta Sereny, for whom I acted when she wrote her first book on the subject, *The Case of Mary Bell* in 1972, I have known in some detail for more than a quarter of a century about Mary Bell's unmentionably awful childhood, though much more has come out in the collaborative sessions with Sereny during the gestation of this book, and revelations, too, deriving from her time in prison." He continued: "When I was

approached some years ago, and asked if I would represent her, I knew that she had a story to tell which could help to change our views about children's crimes and the way we choose to treat them.

"Mary Bell, for her part, also wanted her experiences not just to be sensational — they could scarcely avoid that — but to be of value in bringing about a sea-change in the way we think about these dreadful cases. At my suggestion, she made an attempt at writing her own autobiography — a remarkable heart-breaking testament which she entitled *Life Without Life*. A publisher was willing to publish it but in the end Mary Bell decided against the proposal."

He added: "Some years later I asked through her lawyer whether she might be willing to entertain a collaboration with Gitta Sereny whom, I discovered, was keen to write about Mary Bell. The two met, with apprehension on both sides. Happily, they felt that they could work together, with Gitta Sereny interpreting Mary Bell's account with her own penetrating insight into child psychology. *Cries Unheard* is the fruit of their project.



Hilary Rubinstein at home yesterday. He made no apology for his role in negotiating the agreement

"I believe Mary Bell is deserving of our sympathy for the sustained cruelties of her early years when so much might have been done to deflect or alleviate her suffering, and for the further traumas that were visited upon her when she was sent abruptly at the age of 18 from the sympathetic environment of a remand home to the iron bars of jail.

Unheard were coming out with a statement that Mary Bell had refused payment or was giving money to the NSPCC or some other charity. But Mary Bell feels that she has paid her debt to society and that she is entitled to use the money to provide a better start for her daughter than she

had herself. But I know that she has turned her back on far, far more that she might have made from her story if she had sold to the highest tabloid bidder, and preferred instead to allow her tale to be interpreted by Gitta Sereny.

"In much that has been written about the case this last week, there has been one frequent refrain: 'Mary Bell perpetrated a terrible crime 27 years ago. She is deserving of no mercy.'

"I hope that some people reading this article and then the book will consider the possibilities of redemption and the occasions for compassion."

CRIS UNHEARD
Today's extract, pages 20-21

Official: you can now water the lawn

By Nick Nuttall
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

THE drought will be declared officially over today at the end of the wettest April this century. Ministers and officials at the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, will be advised that heavy winter rains and April flooding reversed two-and-a-half years of dwindling supplies.

Most river flows are at or above average for the time of year and most reservoirs are at or near full, save for a few trouble spots, mainly in the South East and eastern England.

Dr Giles Phillips, the head of resources at the Environment Agency, said most water companies were now confident of their supplies for the coming summer.

"Many companies are presently reporting low demand for water from the public. This is good news and, if people continue to use water wisely, there will be more left to support our rivers and streams through this summer," he said.

"The drought has focused a great deal of attention on the importance of managing demand for water and has raised the profile of issues such as leakage reduction and metering."

Leading article letters, page 25

Forecast, page 28

Lawrence family say police denied attack was racial

By Richard Duce

THE parents of the murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence yesterday bitterly criticised police for claiming that he was not the victim of a racial attack.

Neville and Doreen Lawrence broke away from the 19th day of the inquiry into Stephen's death to say that, five years on, police still had no consideration for their feelings. Three detectives have told the inquiry in South London that Stephen was the victim of a gang that would have stabbed him regardless of his colour.

Mrs Lawrence said: "Right from day one, no consideration has been given to our feelings as human beings. It just seems like the police are playing games by using different tactics in their ploy to shift away from their actions in not making any early arrest until two weeks later."

"I have been saying all along that the police are out

there to protect the boys who murdered my son and not to ensure that they lock them up for the crime they committed."

Detective Sergeant John Davidson told the inquiry that Stephen would have been killed were he "black, white, green or yellow". He described the killing as "pure bloody-minded thuggery".

After the murder in southeast London in 1993, two police liaison officers were appointed to keep the family in touch with the investigation. Detective Sergeant John Bevan, one of the liaison officers, told the inquiry yesterday that he had been unable to establish a rapport with the Lawrences and that he had found Mrs Lawrence "aggressive".

Mr Bevan said he had never acted as a liaison officer before and had not read police guidelines on the role. "I was put into a difficult job. I gave it my all and, yes, I failed."

The hearing continues.

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THE TIMES

Trout tickling could take sm off your face

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Germans warm to Cool Britannia

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

COOL Britannia is a strange place where the Queen goes to football matches, where mad cows go to heaven and Tony Blair, wearing Pepe jeans, has a thing or two to teach Helmut Kohl.

Children from 140 German schools, lured by the prospect of a free trip to London and a cup of tea with Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, have been presenting their vision of Britain.

Although the general tone is upbeat, the scars of past Anglo-German confrontations are also visible.

There is some straight talking. "We think the English food is terrible," say 12-year-old pupils from a Troisdorf grammar school, "and perhaps they think our food isn't good. We can't eat beans on toast for breakfast." Not surprisingly this poster failed to win a major prize.

Some 14-year-olds, in a poster decorated with a picture of Mr Bean, offer some disloyal doggerel: "Economically you're on the mend. / Tony Blair has put an end! / To unemployment, New Britain, said the Ger-



Tony Blair spans the Channel in a winning entry

man schoolchildren, also meant "more toleration, more gay and less straight".

The hiccup in Anglo-German relations over the past few years emerge clearly from the entries. A class of 18-year-olds adapted Elton John's *Candle in the Wind* to mourn Britain's BSE-ridden cows. A video tape had the class singing along.

The class probably characterised Herr Kohl's relationship with previous Conservative governments when they sang: *And it seems to us you live your life like a barb in our skin.*

Mr Blair comes second in the entries. He is treated, nonetheless, as a kind of superman. The poster which shared the first prize showed Mr Blair, in jeans, stretching over the Channel.

This beautiful island once ruled by the Queen! Has a new salvation: here comes Tony the Keen.
Julia, a primary school girl, offered a picture of the Queen on roller skates so perhaps she too is cool enough for new Britain. A 12-year-old German boy confirmed it: the Queen apparently nurtures a secret love of football.

In Buckingham Palace lives the Queen! And all her popular relatives! The Queen sometimes goes to football matches! In the Champions' League. All the judges, who included Paul Lever, the British ambassador, were astonished by the level of English. Lynn Kennedy, who organised the competition, said "The standard of the language was really high."

Goodbye England's crown
May you never have died in vain,
You were the most that meant disease
And madness lent you fame.
You called out to our Union
And you belonged to those in pain,
Now your bones will be missed here
And the rich soil out your name.

And it seems to us you lived your life
Like the cattle in the wind,
Always bristled in the sunset:
Europe did you in.
Your T-shirts will be missed here
All over England's finest grille,
Your bodies will be longer than
Your legend ever will.

Please us would lose
These empty days without your strife,
This mean by us it always carry
For over Union's golden child,
And even if we tried
We would miss you like the fire
All our words cannot express
How hard we'd be without you.

And it seems to us you live your life
Like a barb in our skin,
Always bristled in the sunset:
Europe did you in.
Your T-shirts will be missed here
All over England's finest grille,
Your bodies will be longer than
Your legend ever will.

Photos and drawing by German students



Time for tea: Britain depicted by young Germans

Trout tickling could take smile off your face

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE delicate rural art of trout tickling is to be banned under new bylaws intended to stamp out poaching and prevent the spread of disease among freshwater fish.

Generations of country children have tested their prowess at catching the fish by hand, but any doing so now will risk prosecution and a fine of up to £2,000 if caught.

The Environment Agency said trout tickling, or groping, would be covered by proposed bylaw number five. This states that "any person who removes salmon, migratory trout or trout either dead or alive by means other than rod and line from rivers, streams, drains and canals without proper written authority of the Agency shall be guilty of an offence."

Michael Stag, a warden on the River Stour in Suffolk and Essex for the London Anglers' Association, has written to the Ministry of Agriculture, which has yet to ratify the proposal, pleading for the bylaw to be amended "to allow brown trout to be removed by L-killing". He said yesterday: "It seems to me rather ridiculous that a young lad could end up appearing before a magistrate because he happened to be caught by some

irate riparian landowner trying to tickle trout. It is not as if he would be posing much of a threat to the trout population."

Mr Stag learnt the craft of tickling as a 12-year-old wartime evacuee in Lancashire. "The trick is to take the fish unawares," he recalled yesterday. "Tickling is a bit of a misnomer really. You have to pass your hand gently under the body of the fish from behind and then grasp it quickly. They are very slippery and will easily slide out of your hands."

Adrian Taylor, the agency's fisheries officer, said yesterday: "Trout tickling is just not on. Just how effective it is, I am not sure, but it is a recognised method of poaching and is certainly illegal."

Chris Poupard, director of the Salmon and Trout Association, said: "Poaching is a problem and we need laws to stop it. There are a lot of cowboys about who net fish illegally and move them around the country or sell them, and this can spread disease."

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Rivalry between cancer funds 'is wasting cash'

Ian Murray on a call for 600 charities to pool resources to beat disease

TOO many cancer charities are competing for funds and attention, the head of one of the largest research bodies complained yesterday. The rivalry between 600 organisations was wasting money, duplicating research and confusing the public, said Gordon McVie, director-general of the Cancer Research Campaign, which provides £49 million in research grants a year.

subscribe to — at the Cancer Research Campaign there are more than 700 projects that people can choose from."

At present the Government funded only £14 million of the £50 million spent on cancer research each year in Britain. "I can see little hope that we will get any more, so we must use what we have as effectively as possible," Professor McVie said.

"Our common enemy is cancer, not each other," he told the fiftieth anniversary meeting of the North West Cancer Research Fund. "We need to pool our resources and effort if we are to beat it."

Professor McVie said there were at least 600 cancer charities and this meant that money was being dissipated on overlapping administrative costs. Moreover, too little was known about what research was being conducted by smaller organisations. "I know about what is happening in the top 20, which means there are 580 that I just do not know anything about. Smaller organisations cannot possibly fund major research, which means that the standards are lowered."

"Until two or three years ago we were able to fund all the top alpha-grade projects, but now we do not have enough money to do that. At the same time smaller charities fund research into beta-standard ideas. We need to get

together to discuss a strategy for the future. The threat must be that there are going to be more administrative costs because of government legislation, more VAT returns and increasing costs. The bigger charities can cope with that and can offer to help smaller ones, but we need to work much more closely together. Of all the voluntary medical

sectors, cancer is the most oversubscribed."

He urged people who wanted to set up a charity in memory of someone who had died of cancer to do so within a bigger organisation. This was the method chosen by Bobby Moore's widow, who set up a fund in her husband's memory to research bowel cancer, the disease from which he died. The money raised in the footballer's name has been given to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, which has so far set up two research units with it. "There is something for everybody to support and

said, Paul Nurse, director general of the ICRF, which funds £51 million of the research a year, backed his call yesterday. "The effective co-ordination of cancer research is made more complex by the proliferation of small charities," he said.

The Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund, which spends £41 million a year on training and providing specialist nurses to look after people with cancer, was less happy. "Cancer is 200 different diseases and each needs its own specialists," Caroline Davidge, spokeswoman for

the fund, said. Cancerlink, an umbrella organisation for 600 local and specialist cancer support groups with a £1.3 million budget, said there was a real need for its organisation. "We have those who look after groups of cancer victims like Jews, says and ethnic minorities as well as those who concentrate on helping people who have rare types of the disease," Helen Etheridge, its spokeswoman, said.

There was support for Professor McVie from politicians on both sides of the House. Virginia Bottomley, former Conservative Health Secretary, said: "There is merit in the effort that should be put into research treatment and care, and not charities campaigning against each other."

Tam Dalyell, Labour MP for Lintithgow, said: "Scientists are spending an enormous amount of time running round to different charities. This is not a sensible way to occupy the extremely valuable time of those who have a rare talent to investigate cancer."

But Stephen Dorrell, the last Conservative Health Secretary, warned that it would be wrong to have a rule of "just five big cancer charities". He said: "The burden of proof is on the bigger charities to show that they can deliver better value than other charities in the same field."



Fiona Castle, wife of the late Roy Castle, unveils a statue to him at the Roy Castle Centre for lung cancer research in Liverpool yesterday. The *Trumpet*, by the local sculptor Stephen Broadbent, was commissioned by an anonymous donor

Hospital brings the smokers in from cold

By A CORRESPONDENT

A HOSPITAL has angered anti-smoking groups by becoming the first in the country to re-introduce a smoking room for patients and visitors. Addenbrooke's in Cambridge banned smoking from all its buildings five years ago but the hospital trust has reversed the decision after patients — many in pyjamas, some still on drips and even some on trolleys — gathered outside the main entrance for a cigarette. Trust members decided it was not right to force patients to stand outside in the cold.

Addenbrooke's spokeswoman Christine Anderson said: "It will be a smoking room, to stop patients wandering outside in their pyjamas. It's also not very nice to pull up to the hospital when there's a group of people outside smoking. However ill people are, if they feel the need to smoke they go and stand just outside the main entrance. It's difficult to stop someone like a terminal cancer patient from having a cigarette."

The decision was criticised by the anti-smoking pressure group ASH. Pauline Doyle said: "We think it's incredibly disappointing and sends the wrong signal to patients who are recovering from very serious illnesses. Being in hospital is serious and their best chance is to give up smoking. It's a pity the hospital is not concentrating its efforts on persuading people to do that."

£75m research charity spends third on costs

By Victoria Fletcher

THE Cancer Research Campaign has offices around the country and annually receives £75 million from fundraising, trading and its commercial outlets including its shops.

Of this money, about £50 million is given for research. Individual scientists and teams can apply for a grant three times a year, and in 1998 the charity claims it will fund more than a third of research into the disease in the UK. However, more than £23 million a year is spent operating the charity. This covers publicity and administration of six regional offices and London head office.

Although ventures such as the Cancer Research Campaign shops raise more than £16 million, their operating costs are vast, leaving a profit of only about £3 million. The amount of funding offered is great but the charity's decisions on which scientists deserve funds and which are not

conducting research complying with requirements leave many avenues of work into cancer without backing.

The Association for International Cancer Research based in St Andrews, Fife, is one of the medium-sized charities in the field. It raises £3.4 million a year and of this, only 4 per cent is spent on administration costs for one office with a eight staff. The charity provides grants for over 120 projects in 13 countries and funds less mainstream research.

Derek Napier, chief executive of the association, said: "There are people out there doing the groundwork into cancer which is crucial for later research to base its work upon. Many top-grade scientists working in unpopular research areas would be forced to drop out if a big umbrella group were imposed." The charity has already received a 40 per cent

rise in grant applications after the narrowing of the work that the bigger charities will fund.

Among small groups is Leukaemia Busters set up by Dr David Flavell after the death of his son from the disease in 1980. It has its office within Southampton General Hospital to keep overheads low and only recently started to employ a fundraiser to help boost its yearly £200,000 of donations. All this money is used by Dr Flavell and six other scientists to research into an antibody based treatment for leukaemia and lymphoma.

Although the work also receives a grant from two of the big cancer charities, the money from Leukaemia Busters is crucial. Dr Flavell said: "Large groups mean workers are detached from the grassroots and perhaps the events and community who inspired the work."

New spread 'could cut deaths from heart attack'

By Nick Nuttall, Technology Correspondent

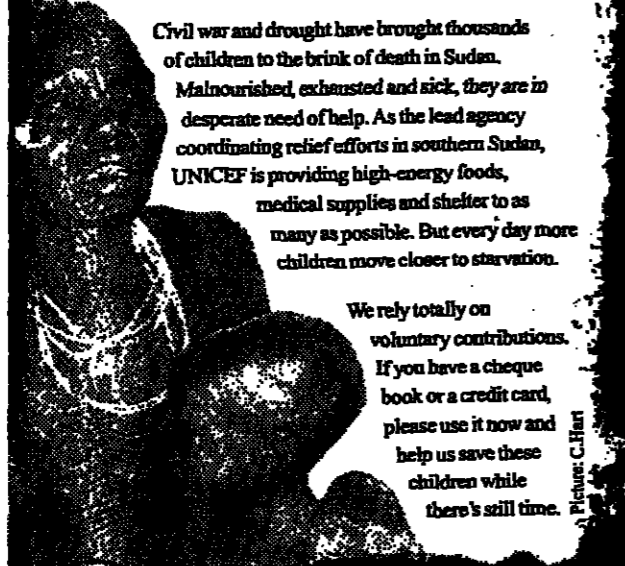
A MARGARINE which, it is claimed, could reduce deaths from heart attack by a fifth is expected to go on sale here and in the rest of Europe next year.

The product, developed by Unilever, makers of Flora, can reduce levels of cholesterol in the blood by 10 per cent by blocking its absorption from the gut. Trials are published this week in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. The researchers, led by scientists at Unilever's laboratory in Vlaardingen, Holland, compared the spread with Flora, butter and Benecol — a spread only on sale in Finland. Each day for several weeks, 100 volunteers with normal or slightly raised blood cholesterol levels ate 30 grams of spread, equivalent to four slices of bread. The volunteers switched to Flora for the same period, then Benecol and then butter.

The new margarine, which is rich in oils from soya beans called sterols, reduced total blood cholesterol by 8.3 per cent compared with Flora. *New Scientist* magazine reports. Flora cut levels by 3 per cent compared with butter. Someone eating butter and switching to the new spread could cut their cholesterol by over 10 per cent; Unilever claims this could cut deaths from coronary heart disease by 20 per cent. But the trials also showed that the spread reduces the uptake of carotenoids, an antioxidant thought to help protect against cancer. The are trying to fine-tune the product.

CHILDREN IN SUDAN ARE DYING

She's exhausted and starving, but she's walked all day to bring her grandchild to a relief centre. She may be too late.



Civil war and drought have brought thousands of children to the brink of death in Sudan. Malnourished, exhausted and sick, they are in desperate need of help. As the lead agency coordinating relief efforts in southern Sudan, UNICEF is providing high-energy foods, medical supplies and shelter to as many as possible. But every day more children move closer to starvation.

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Plans for Handel museum are halted

Project frustrated by refusal to sell house. Dalya Alberge reports

PLANS to create a museum dedicated to Handel in the house where the great composer lived for 36 years have been brought to a halt after nearly eight years of planning. A museum would have recreated the front room of 25 Brook Street in Central London, where Handel composed his *Messiah* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, and would have filled the building with live concerts, workshops and exhibitions.

Instead, the owners of the building, the Co-operative Insurance Society (CIS), have decided not to sell the house to the Handel House Trust and appear to be considering a memorial display rather than an entire museum. The front room from which the entrepreneur Handel sold tickets to his concerts and scores of his music is to be used for commercial purposes.

Musicians and academics expressed despair that such a historic room could be reduced to little more than a

boutique for clothes or shoes. While Britain has only the Elgar and Holst museums, there are more than 150 museums devoted to composers throughout Europe. The Mozart museum in Salzburg attracts 369,000 visitors a year.

Even though the trust had raised more than £3 million

from private sources — of which £675,000 would have gone on buying the house itself and £500,000 on acquiring a collection of original manuscripts and memorabilia — plans were scuppered when the Heritage Lottery Fund was unable to offer an immediate £1.4 million grant. The fund expressed concern about whether the scheme was financially viable, saying that a grant for building works would be subject to the trust having a £2 million endowment in place.

The CIS did not feel it could wait. It had kept the property vacant since 1995 to enable the trust to raise the necessary funds, a spokesman said. He emphasised that it hoped to work with the trust on a reduced version of the museum.

Hearing the news, the conductor Sir Neville Marriner said: "It's a sad decision. Handel is one of the few composers to whom we lay claim." Nicholas Kenyon, controller of BBC Radio 3, said:



Handel's house in Brook Street, London

"It seems utterly absurd that every major European country can have museums and houses devoted to composers and that England can't do the same for someone who, even if he wasn't born here, wrote some of the best music to have come out of this country."

Fionn Morgan, a music lover who has been in touch with the trust, said: "It seems extraordinary that within a nation brought up on the *Messiah*, this should be allowed to happen. All that was needed at this last-minute crisis was generosity and flexibility from the major donor and from CIS... who would surely prefer to have been known as patrons of musical heritage than as owners of a dress shop."

Christopher Purvis, a Handel House trustee, suggested that a reduced version of the museum was better than nothing. "We are now in discussion with the CIS about the possibility of co-operating with them. The CIS obviously has



The composer George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

an interest in maximising the value to its shareholders. □ The Park Lane house where Benjamin Disraeli died could be partially demolished and turned into flats, it emerged last night. Westminster City

Council said that it will today consider proposals to redevelop what some say are among the finest historic buildings in Mayfair — including the last home of the 19th-century Tory Prime Minister.

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Planet's new moons are on the dark side

By NIGEL HAWKES SCIENCE EDITOR

TWO new moons have been discovered in orbit around the planet Uranus. Small and distant from the planet, they have never been spotted before because they are so dim.

The moons, which have not yet been named, were found by a team led by Dr Brett Gladman, of the University of Toronto. Unlike the other giant planets, Uranus had appeared to have no "irregular" moons in unusual orbits.

These objects are almost certainly not moons in the conventional sense, but bodies originating in the outer solar system and captured in the past by the gravitational field of the giant planets and forced into orbit around them.

Why Uranus had failed to capture such an object was a mystery, now solved by the disclosure that nobody had hitherto looked hard enough.

The team used cameras mounted on the five-metre Hale Telescope at Palomar Observatory. They estimate that the moons are 40 and 80 miles in diameter, and orbit Uranus at a distance several hundred times the radius of the parent planet. As well as being very faint, they are unusually red in colour.

Why PMT is a little like a hangover

By NIGEL HAWKES SCIENCE EDITOR

PREMENSTRUAL tension is not a million miles from a hangover, according to American researchers.

They have found that the gloomy feelings associated with both conditions, and with post-natal depression, are caused by a common mechanism. The discovery could lead to treatments for all three conditions.

The common feature is a complex chain of brain signals which determine how anxious or how calm we feel. At its heart is a chemical called 3 alpha, 5 alpha-THP, produced by the breakdown of the hormone progesterone.

Women who are pregnant, or who are reaching the end of their monthly cycle, have high levels of progesterone, and hence high levels of THP. But when pregnancy ends, or just before menstruation starts, the levels of both drop sharply.

This in turn affects the production of a particular receptor in the brain, reducing the efficiency of the system used to control symptoms of anxiety, says a team from Allegheny University of Health Sciences in Philadelphia, reported in *Nature*.

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Straw blames lax sentencing for £2bn car crime

LENIENT sentencing of young offenders is partly to blame for the theft of cars worth £2 billion every year in this country, the Home Secretary said yesterday.

The UK has the highest figure for car crime in Europe with 1,400 cars stolen every day. Of these, 150,000 are never recovered. Speaking at the launch of the Consumers' Association Car Security Guide, Jack Straw said that many youngsters do not care about being caught because they were often not punished severely enough by the youth justice system.

Mr Straw, who has been a victim of car crime three times in the past eight years, told how his Ford Orion was stolen from outside his home in Blackburn five years ago. He offered two tickets to see Blackburn Rovers for information leading to the recovery of the car and the arrest of the offender.

He said: "Within minutes of the local paper appearing a CID officer took two calls, one from an informer, naming the thief, and another from my secretary's daughter who saw two men discussing the sale of my car near the police station. A chap was arrested and he got a conditional discharge. That's the youth courts for you."

No one took up his ticket offer as the informer did not want to give his name and his secretary's daughter supported Manchester United. Mr Straw said that often people just forgot to lock their cars or left possessions on show.

Some offenders often stole cars or from cars to pay for a drug habit.

He added: "It is also to do with the ineffectiveness of the youth justice procedure. It is mainly lads that go thieving and they get away with it and I have seen that in the courts. We are now making the youth courts faster and tougher and ensuring that in the future young criminals know what the consequences are likely to be. Before they get a warning and another warning which upset both police and the public."

The Consumers' Association said yesterday at the London launch that although manufacturers were making it more difficult to steal newer cars, they were not doing enough to stop people stealing from cars. Drivers were paying £500 million a year to replace stolen goods and a further £200 million for repairs.

The association called for laminated glass, which is harder to smash, to be used in all car windows, not just windscreens.

Paul Flatters, director of research at the association, said that research into security showed worrying results. He said: "Thirty-five new cars were rigorously assessed for their ability to withstand attacks by thieves. The most worrying results are those that show how vulnerable our possessions are inside a car." In all cases, he said, theft was very easy, even in cars that were hard to drive away.

"What we want is somewhere secure inside a car for possessions to be left. Most glove compartments may look secure but are easy to prise open." But that finding may have surprised Mr Straw who tried to demonstrate breaking into a glove compartment. He had to ask for help from one of the researchers posing as a car thief - who managed it in seconds.

Some 2.5 million drivers report theft from their cars every year but many more fail to inform police or claim on insurance.

A survey among CA members shows that compared with the average, Audis and Volkswagens are 2.6 times as likely to be broken into, BMWs 2.2 times and Mercedes 1.5 times.

Youngsters do not care about being caught because punishment is too weak, reports Adam Fresco



THE long arm of the law reached Kate Timms 30ft above the pavements of London yesterday when she scaled a government building to protest against arms sales. Miss Timms, 19, and Chris Parker, 20, both students from Cardiff, hoisted themselves up the glass front of the Department of Trade and Industry building in Victoria at lunchtime yesterday. The pair, members of the Campaign Against Arms Trade, were demonstrating against the sale of weapons to the

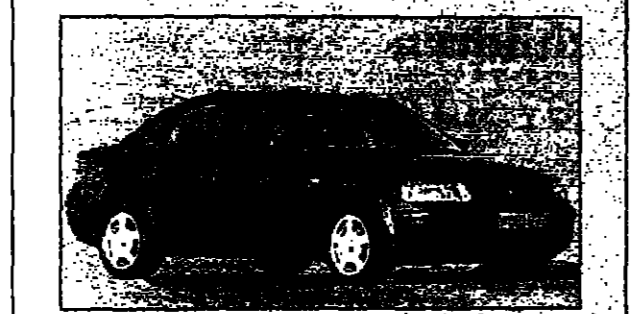
Police rope in protester

Turkish, Indonesian and Saudi Arabian Governments. Their protest coincided with British Aerospace's general meeting, which was held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre across the road. After brief negotiations with a police officer on a ladder, the pair were allowed to unfurl a banner saying "BAe - murder by proxy". Mr Parker shouted: "The Department of Trade and Industry issues British Aerospace with trade export licences and is therefore contributing to human rights abuses." Two specialist police officers then used mountaineering equipment to help the pair to descend. Chief Inspector Peter Sadowski said: "These two young

people are passionate about their causes and they are to be admired, but young and passionate people still get hurt. The demonstrators were not wearing safety helmets. It could have been dangerous for people walking past." British Aerospace's meeting was invaded by about 100 members of the arms protest group who had bought token shares in the company so that they could attend. Mr Parker and Miss Timms were arrested but were not expected to be charged.

HOW SECURE IS YOUR CAR?

The Consumers' Association says that the hardest car to steal is the VW Passat, followed by Ford's Ka, Escort and Mondeo, the BMW 318i and Toyota Avensis. Ratings are based on time taken to overcome or remove each security feature: the longer it took, the higher the score.



Volkswagen Passat: most difficult to steal

Car	Score	Rank
Super minis		
Ford Ka 1.3i 5dr	7	4
Vauxhall Corsa 1.6LS 5dr	6	5
Nissan Micra 1.0 16v 5dr	5	6
Fiat Punto 605 5dr	5	7
Ford Fiesta 1.25LX 5dr	5	8
Peugeot 106 1.1M 5dr	5	9
Renault Clio 1.25L 5dr	5	10
Fiat Cinquecento Sport 5dr	5	11
Sat Astra 1.0MPI 5dr	5	12
VW Polo 1.4CL 5dr	5	13
Small family cars		
Renault Megane 1.8RT 5dr	8	2
Rover 2145i 5dr	8	3
Rover 4145i 16v 5 or	8	4
Vauxhall Astra 1.4LS 5dr	6	5
Ford Escort 1.6LX 5dr	7	6
Audi A3 1.8 5dr	8	7
Peugeot 306 1.4LX 5dr	6	8
Toyota Corolla 1.305 5dr	6	9
Honda Civic 1.6LS 3 or	5	10
Mazda 323FCX 16v 5dr	5	11
Fiat Bravo 1.45L 5dr	5	12
VW Golf 1.4L 5dr	5	13
Large family cars		
Vauxhall Vectra 1.8LS 5dr	8	7
VW Passat 1.8 20v 4dr	8	8
Rover 620SI 4dr	8	9
Ford Mondeo 1.8LX 5dr	7	10
Nissan Primera 2.0SXL 4dr	7	11
BMW 318 saloon 4dr	7	12
Citroen Xantia 1.8LX 5dr	6	13
Peugeot 406 1.8LX saloon	6	14
Toyota Avensis 1.805 5dr	5	15
Renault Laguna 1.8RT 5dr	5	16
Fiat Tempra GLX 4dr	5	17
Volkswagen Jetta 1.8 4dr	5	18
Chrysler Neon 2.0 16v 4dr	5	19

Why PMT is a little like a hangover

THE FACTS HE FIGURES

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There's a Great Deal going on

Sinking of yacht is blamed on local feud

Footprints on shoreline may reveal who scuttled £40,000 vessel in Devon, reports Daniel McGrory



Jones: led campaign to clean up harbour

A FEUD between weekend sailors and residents of a Devon village is being blamed for the scuttling of a £40,000 yacht in a dawn raid by saboteurs.

Brian Jones, a retired detective, whose newly refurbished yacht had holes drilled in its hull, is sure that his campaign to clean up Watermouth harbour, near Ilfracombe, is the reason for the attack.

Yesterday, the 30ft-long *Rouselle* was brought to the surface. Mr Jones, 59, gave police the names of those he believes were responsible for the sinking. Detectives have taken plaster casts of footprints from the hillside to the mud at the edge of the shore, and are convinced that the saboteurs live locally.

Mr Jones' boat had only been back in the water for a day after a six-month refit.

During that time he had led a campaign to give Watermouth a facelift and criticised locals for not responding.

It was the second act of sabotage in as many years at Watermouth. Last time a fishing boat was sunk after its hull was sliced open with a chainsaw. The second occasion, the saboteurs avoided the surveillance cameras by creeping through dense woodlands that run down to the shore.

By the time Mr Jones arrived, water was washing across the decks. It had taken him more than three years and £30,000 to refurbish his yacht, and to celebrate he planned to sail it to Brittany, the Isles of Scilly and Falmouth in time for the Tall Ships' race. Yesterday he said repairs would cost at least £30,000, but he vowed that the *Rouselle* would sail again.

Mr Jones said: "Whoever

did this planned it very carefully. They drilled the holes in such a way that the boat would swing round and break its back, and they even blocked the bilge outlets.

"I do not have any enemies, but I have recently been campaigning for better moorings and facilities in the harbour and I suppose I may have upset someone."

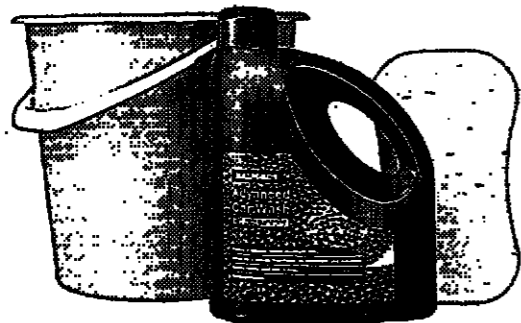
Tony Copping-Joyce, chairman of London and Western Holdings, which runs the harbour, described the sinking as "vandalism", but rejected Mr Jones' criticisms. He said: "In a small community in a situation like this there may be personalities who disagree or have different views as to whether everything is being done to their best advantage."

"I am very surprised at Mr Jones' criticisms of the harbour. We took it over ten years ago when it was very poorly maintained and we have repaired the hard standing, dealt with the harbour wall, replaced all the parking and seating and installed close circuit TV monitors."

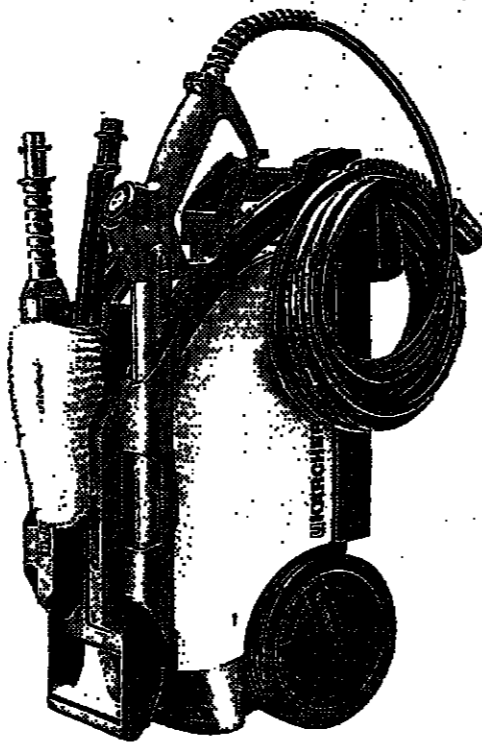


Water pours from the holes drilled in the hull of the *Rouselle*, hauled out of Watermouth Harbour yesterday

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First-born children may suffer more stress

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

FIRST-BORN children may be more tense than their brothers and sisters. Scientists studying stress hormones in monkeys believe that anxious pregnant mothers may pass a higher level of stress hormone to the baby they are carrying.

Nervousness after the birth may also be passed on to the first child, the scientists suggest. By the time other children come along a mother is more confident and relaxed.

Psychologists at the University of Wisconsin exposed 28 rhesus monkeys aged seven and-a-half months to fear-inducing situations. *New Scientist* reported. Cortisol levels were, on average, higher in the first-born monkeys.

Ned Kalin, one of the researchers, said: "Either the mother's level of experience in raising the infant or something that's happening in the uterus between the first and the later pregnancies is very different. That is changing the baby's hormonal status."

Steven Shelton, another researcher, admitted that applying the findings to humans is so far only speculation. "That's a huge step from where we are."

Makers are told to recall ten 'unsafe' baby-walkers

By JOANNA BALE

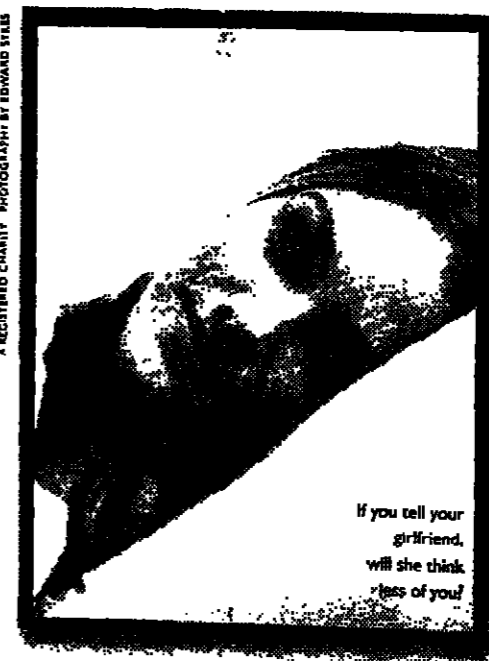
THE Consumer Affairs Minister demanded yesterday that baby-walker manufacturers recall ten models that had been claimed to be dangerous.

Nigel Griffiths urged the Baby Products Association to reconsider its decision to challenge a safety report by trading standards officers in Liverpool published on Tuesday. Mr Griffiths, who is said to be furious at the stance, told a conference on safe design in Manchester: "When my experts have double-checked Liverpool's results, I expect the association to take them very seriously and not to dismiss them. I urge the association to take immediate action."

The officers had warned parents not to let their children use the models until the manufacturers reassured them that they were safe. The BPA has criticised the tests. It said that its members' products were covered by safety certificates and that they would not recall the products.

A ministry source said the report had been held back since November because the BPA had threatened legal action. Further tests produced the same results. Mr Griffiths was "livid" over the industry's response, the source said.

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مكتبة من الأصل

Addiction drove couple to try to kill daughter

Paul Wilkinson reports on the case of a foiled suicide pact by desperate parents unable to cope with heroin

A COUPLE who plotted to kill their only daughter in a suicide pact escaped jail yesterday after a judge was told that drugs had forced the crisis in their lives. Donald and Diane Hirst had turned first to cannabis and then heroin when Mr Hirst lost his job and was still unemployed after a year. Previously the couple, who have been married for 17 years, lived a life of domestic bliss and doted on their only child, who was born ten years ago. But their minds and bodies were unable to cope with the effects of their drug cravings, so late last year they decided to end it all. York Crown Court was told. They agreed to take their daughter with them because they loved her so much that they could not bear to leave her behind.

heard the engine running. He phoned police on his mobile phone and tore off the piping. Officers arrived just in time to drag the couple and their daughter out of the fume-filled saloon. The young girl was unconscious but she revived in the cold November air. Yesterday Hirst, 43, and his

of heroin addiction. It is a terrible illustration of the dangers of drug abuse, which first led to debt and threats and then an increasing inability to cope with the effects. "For years yours was a happy and contented household until unemployment struck. Those years disappeared literally in a puff of heroin smoke, with the results we are now all aware of."

Police recovered a suicide note which read: "This is out of love and desperation. Never have so few owed so much to so many. Please look after our animals back home."

Steven Garth, for Hirst, said: "This is an exceptional and tragic case, born out of a background of desperation. He was a hard-working family man, the breadwinner, devoted to his wife and daughter."

"Until 1994 it was a stable unit, a normal family who loved their only child very much indeed. At the age of 40 he lost his job and, despite determined efforts, found himself on the scrap-heap. He and his wife began smoking cannabis as an escape and then went on to heroin."



Diane and Donald Hirst at York Crown Court after escaping a possible jail term. They admitted attempted murder

to end their lives." He added: "It was distorted and disturbed but they could see no other way out. They loved their daughter too much to leave her behind so they decided to take her with them."

Ken Gilliland, for Diane Hirst, said: "Now she is only too glad her daughter survived. She is a devoted mother and loyal wife, who followed her husband but thought at all times her daughter could be excluded from this."

The couple left court hand in hand. Outside Diane Hirst said: "We have been through a terrible time and the bail conditions meant we could not associate. We were split apart and our desire now is to get

back together as a family and carry on where we left off. We are now both free of drug addiction. It has been a terrible chapter in our lives." Her husband added: "We will rebuild our lives together and be reunited with our daughter. That is all we now want." Hirst is currently living in a bail hostel on Tyne-

Rape case PC tells of his many conquests

By Paul Wilkinson

A POLICEMAN accused of a series of sex attacks told a jury yesterday that he became acquainted with girlfriends at the rate of about two a week.

PC John Blott agreed that he had had "numerous" sexual conquests. "Sometimes, every day or so," he told Leeds Crown Court. But he denied a suggestion from the prosecution that he had picked up hundreds of women a year as he went on patrol. He said: "That's an over-estimation. I wouldn't like to put a figure on it." It depended "on whether or not I am working", he said.

PC Blott, formerly a professional goalkeeper, who has been suspended by Cleveland police, is said to have used his position to pick up young women and lured them back to his home for sex. PC Blott, 33, a single man, of New Marske, Teesside, has denied two rapes and four indecent assaults between 1993 and 1995, when he was a beat bobby in the Middlesbrough area. He claims that the women consented to sexual relations.

He told the jury that he dated lots of women. "We all know that I am good looking," he said. Questioned by Aidan Marron, QC, for the prosecution, he suggested that the women who had made allegations against him were lying.

Ronald Sherwood, Blott's neighbour, said the constable had taken "hundreds" of women back to his home. He "goes out with them a couple of times, gets bored and packs them in", Mr Sherwood said. The trial continues.



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Police save life of woman who revealed death wish on Internet

By Joanna Bale

A BRITISH woman who left a suicide note on the Internet before taking an overdose of drugs was saved by a computer user in America who alerted the police.

The woman had posted a suicide note on an Internet bulletin board, saying she had taken a mixture of painkillers, anti-depressants and alcohol.

After the American Internet user alerted police in Britain, officers broke into her home in West Yorkshire. She was alone and barely alive five hours after taking the overdose.

The woman, whose identity has not been disclosed, was taken to St James's University Hospital, Leeds, where doctors saved her life. Dr Sean Lynch, a consultant psychiatrist who treated the woman, said electronic cries for help should be treated just as seriously as suicide notes left at home.

He said: "She was in her mid-30s and suffering depression after the breakdown of a relationship. She is a professional woman who had used the Internet for work and for social contact. She is now well and very grateful to the person who relayed her e-mail address to the emergency services."

Dr Lynch wrote about the case in the *Psychiatric Bulletin*, suggesting that the Internet might be routinely screened for such notes. He added: "I am sure this won't be the last time this happens. It's somewhere between a

phone message where you tried to say goodbye and a proper note left for someone to discover."

He said that other people acting in the same way as in this case last year might not be so lucky. "This woman's life was saved because of the presence of mind of the person who picked it up. If this method increases in popularity, it could be very risky as messages may not be taken seriously or acted upon."

A spokesman for *Hospital Doctor* magazine, which featured the story, said: "We were staggered when we came across this case, which we believe to be the first of its kind."

Last night the Samaritans said that its volunteers received a growing amount of electronic correspondence from depressed people via e-mail.

A spokeswoman, Lise Colyer, said: "I have never heard of someone actually putting their suicide note on the Internet. But we get more and more people in crisis putting down their thoughts on e-mail to our Internet Web site. Some people find it difficult to voice feelings of despair on the telephone. We have volunteers who take calls from people who just sob for an hour or more."

"Writing down your feelings in an e-mail to the Samaritans may help some people get to the point of their problem quicker. If they want our help, we will reply by e-mail."

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Ex-Labour aide attacks use of 'evil' blind trusts

By VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

A FORMER Labour aide condemned the blind trusts used in opposition by Tony Blair and his senior colleagues as an "evil device" yesterday and implied that party leaders knew the identity of the donors.

After giving evidence to the Neill inquiry into party funding, Henry Drucker said he doubted that benefactors would give money to the party without some form of recognition. "We are talking about very sophisticated people who would not have given a bean unless there were enough nods and winks that Tony was, of course, grateful and they were assured this was the case."

Later in the Commons Mr Blair dismissed Dr Drucker's comments, repeating that he did not know the identity of anyone who had contributed to his blind trust.

Dr Drucker, who was headhunted by Labour after raising £340million for Oxford University, worked as a fundraising adviser to the party between February and

April 1996. Yesterday he told the Neill committee that Mr Blair's chief fundraiser, Michael Levy, now Lord Levy, blocked attempts to close down blind trusts for Shadow Cabinet members in the run-up to last year's general election. "I was outgunned by Michael Levy, who was a deep believer in the blind funds."

After the inquiry hearing he described a row over the issue during which, he said, Lord Levy threw him out of his house in North London. Dr Drucker had gone to the house to discuss a report he had written recommending closure of the blind trusts.

"He was very, very angry. He was very rude. He stood, he shouted. It was an hilarious exchange. He said: 'I'm your manager, how dare you do all this?'"

There was to be a meeting the following Sunday at Lord Levy's house to discuss Dr Drucker's report with Mr Blair and others. "He disinformed me and said 'You need not bother to turn up.' He told me to get out of his house."



Drucker advised Labour on fundraising

Dr Drucker said that the day after the Blair meeting with Lord Levy his report was rejected.

Lord Levy was not available for comment last night but Dr Drucker's version of events was disputed by Tom Sawyer, Labour's general secretary. He said that Dr Drucker's report on raising funds was "not up to the job" and that he was "unable to come to terms with rejection".

Unnamed Labour ministers and the main political parties are to be accused

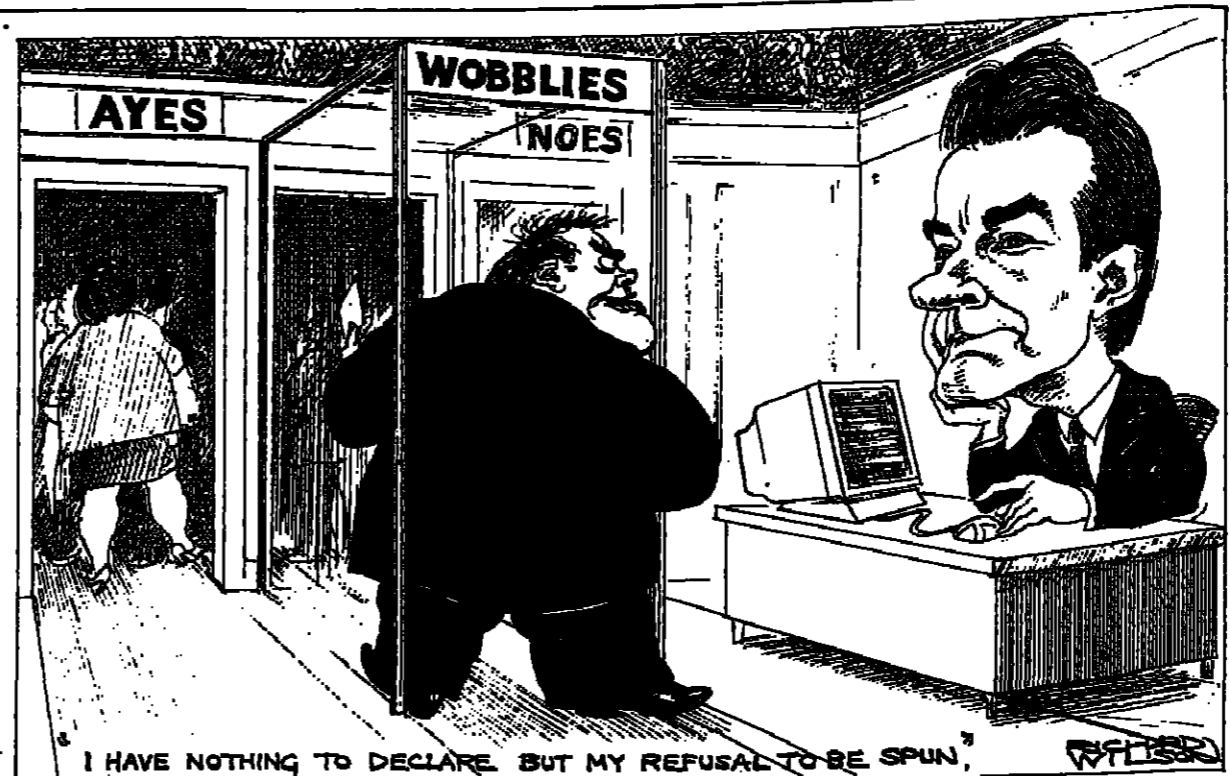
today of "persistent and systematic fraud" in the conduct of parliamentary by-elections.

Michael Crick, a journalist on BBC's *Newsnight*, will tell the Neill inquiry that senior figures from all political parties have massively exceeded the limit on elections expenses and "actively participated" in this kind of fraud. He claims that several are now prominent politicians.

Mr Crick asserts that party agents, officials and candidates have privately admitted to him they have broken election law at by-elections. In a statement prepared for today's inquiry hearing he says: "They massage the figures, omit major items of expenditure and then spend enormous efforts concocting fraudulent declarations afterwards."

He also quotes an anonymous former Tory by-election candidate who told his campaign team to stick within the law. "In that case you will lose," they told him. "So the party overspent, broke the law, and lost anyway," Mr Crick claims.

Michael Crick, page 24



SITTING on the fence — a sensation enjoyed by Englishmen down the ages — is to be given formal recognition at Westminster (Nicholas Watt writes).

MPs are to be asked whether they want the right to register abstentions in Commons votes for the first time in the history of Parliament. At present those who decide against voting in the Aye or No lobbies are recorded as absent, but under reforms of the voting procedures a third lobby would be created. Yesterday the all-party Modernisation Com-

MPs may adopt new third way

mittee gave MPs until May 20 to say whether they support the change.

MPs who decide to abstain have to go to great lengths to publicise their position. During the vote on cutting benefits to single parents last year 15 Labour MPs sat conspicuously on the

back benches to highlight their abstention. They did not support the cuts but did not want to join the 47 rebels in the No lobby. Up to 40 other Labour MPs stayed away from Westminster. One of the conspicuous abstainers, Rhodri Morgan, MP for Cardiff West, said yesterday: "I am in favour of registering formal abstentions. It would have made an even greater impact at that critical moment. The spin-doctors would not have been able to wish us away when we felt our loyalty had been stretched."

Monks is right on unions' new symbolic role

THE continuing dispute over trade union recognition is not really about percentages or thresholds. These are the symbols, not the essence. That is about Tony Blair, and the distinction between old and new Labour. Mr Blair's self-proclaimed "rule number one" is "do not forget why we won". When he said before the election that the unions would be treated in the same way as business, with no favours, he meant it — even if some of his ministerial colleagues in other departments still do not accept this view.

The point was well made yesterday by Peter Mandelson, the prime strategist of new Labour, in a speech, revealingly, to the Institute of Directors' annual conference. Before last year's election, fears had been expressed by some people that, afterwards, if the party won power, "the real face of old Labour would be unmasked; that the unions would be trooping back to Downing Street — not as part of the legitimate consultations that any government should properly have with industry, but to call in their favours and cash in on their supposed secret deals. Well there never were any, and there are no post-dated cheques waiting to be cashed". No senior minister in any previous Labour Government would have talked like that — which is precisely why some union leaders find the new approach and language so hard to accept.

Mr Blair's priority in his discussions on union recognition has been to secure broad agreement including not only the trade unions but also business. He believes that such a consensus is vital if any proposal is to stick and work over the long term. He does not want to jeopardise the broadly pro-business stance and reputation of his Government. This is in contrast to Michael Foot's big extension of union rights in 1974, which was vigorously opposed by business.

The Blair camp argues that signing up to the social chapter and the introduction of the national minimum wage are now being accepted by business. Mr Mandelson offered the argument yesterday that Britain has "used the opportu-

nity of participating in the social chapter to engage Europe in a new debate on how we move away from the old agenda of burdensome labour market regulation to a new agenda of how we promote employability and adaptability". The view of Labour as the friend of flexible labour markets is not to the liking of either the old Labour Left or the business Right. Tim Melville-Ross of the Institute of Directors made plain at yesterday's conference that business was not happy with all Government policies, including those on union recognition and the social chapter.

Both the Government and the unions are finding the transition to a new relationship difficult. Mr Blair believes that the unions are ignoring other features of the forthcoming *Fairness at Work* White Paper which favour them, such as making unfair the dismissal of workers in

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

legally called industrial disputes and removing the qualifying period a worker must serve to secure full employment rights. Union leaders feel the Government, and employers, have hardened their position unreasonably, though Labour's manifesto commitment on the issue was, deliberately, ambiguous. That is shown by the wounded approach of John Edmonds and other big union leaders in interviews.

The unions' frustrations, and sense that the shift to a partnership approach in industrial relations is insufficiently recognised, has been put more subtly by John Monks, the TUC General Secretary. As he writes in today's issue of the *New Statesman*: "What I do complain about is the symbolic role that unions have been given by some in new Labour's Britain. For them our primary role is to define what new Labour isn't." He is right. Them and us has taken on a new meaning in the Blairite lexicon.

PETER RIDDELL

Blair and Hague go live on the Internet

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

TONY BLAIR and William Hague made a modest piece of computer history yesterday when they took to the Internet to answer questions from the public.

The Prime Minister gave a video interview that was broadcast live on the new Downing Street website. Sir David Frost selected the questions, which had been sent in via e-mail before and during the hour-long session.

Not to be outdone, the Tory leader held two half-hour

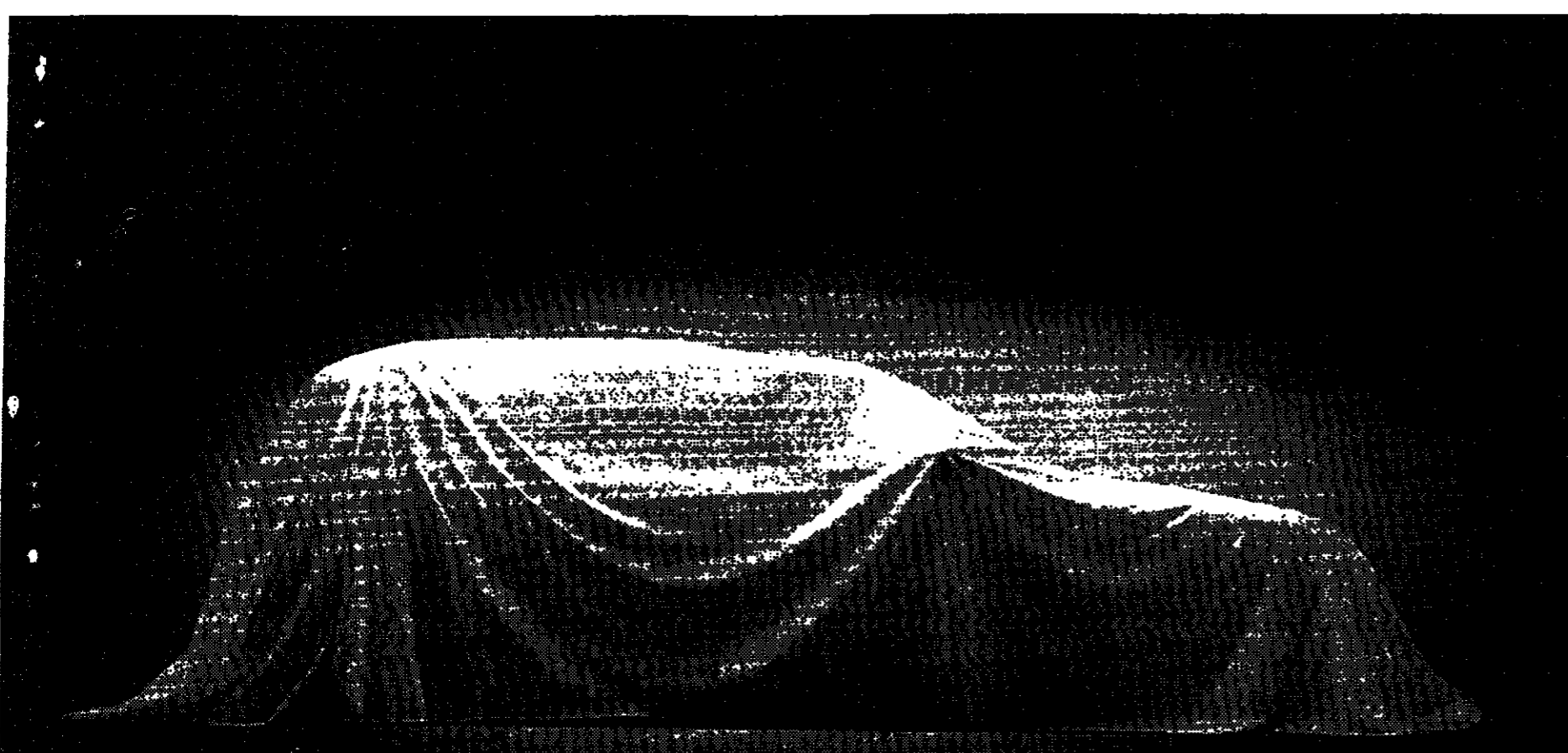
question-and-answer sessions with the public on the Net. Mr Hague sat next to a computer operator in Central Office who typed in his answers to the questions, all of which came in live. He also allowed an internet reporter and photographer put out an account of his routine yesterday.

Mr Blair faced questions on a range of subjects and an unusual job application from the wife of Austin Mitchell, the 63-year-old Labour MP for Great Grimsby. She identified herself as "Linda" and asked why only one MP over 60 had a ministerial post.

Mr Blair said: "Of course I believe people have a contribution to make, whatever their age. I'll bear Austin in mind in the next reshuffle."

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons: agriculture questions. Debate on monetary union. State the status. In the Lords: debates on ceremony of introduction for power Community Care (Residential Accommodation) Bill, second reading; report on EU electronic directive.



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ALWAY

Butlin's braces itself for winds of change

Robin Young on a £40m facelift for the holiday camp at Skegness

ANTHEA TURNER was in Skegness on the famously bracing Lincolnshire coast yesterday, endeavouring to persuade customers that Butlin's had re-invented the holiday camp, more recently styled the holiday centre, and now to be known as the family entertainment resort.

Turner was the latest in a long line of celebrities to be associated with the company which the late Sir Billy Butlin launched when he opened his first holiday camp at Skegness in 1936. Laurel and

Hardy judged knobby knees competitions for Butlin in the 1940s. Sir Cliff Richard, Des O'Connor, Michael Barrymore, Dave Allen, Jimmy Tarbuck, Ted Rogers and Roy Hudd all started their careers as Butlin's Redcoats, and Catherine Zeta Jones, Alvin Stardust, Anne Kirkbride (who plays Deirdre Rachtid in *Coronation Street*) and Les Dennis were all contestants in Butlin's talent contests. Ringo Starr was a drummer with the Puffdaddy camp's resident band in the early 1950s and even

Glenda Jackson, Minister for Transport in London, worked in a Butlin's coffee bar.

Since the camp opened at Skegness, 100 million people have taken Butlin's holidays and the number of visitors, despite the rivalry of new competitors such as Center Parcs still runs at 2 million a year. The Rank Organisation, which has owned Butlin's since 1972, has expended nearly 200,000 litres of paint refurbishing 3,300 apartments and painting more than 1,000 new ones since announcing a

major reinvestment in the brand last year.

One of the original holiday chalets at Skegness is now preserved as a listed building by order of English Heritage, but the word "chalet" disappeared from Butlin's brochures in the 1980s, and much else in the Butlin's order of things has changed as well.

Beauty contests were abandoned in 1996 after a 30-year run, and this year will see the last Supergran competition, successor to what used to be the Glamorous Grandmother contest. There has not been a knobby knees competition since 1985, mother-in-law jokes have been banned and single-sex bookings for groups of four or more under the age of 30 have been outlawed too, in an attempt to make the family entertainment resorts fit for family fun, rather than the sex romps which were sometimes said to mar the desired atmosphere. Wake-up calls were a feature until the 1970s, but today Butlin's guests are allowed to lie in.



Past forward: Butlin's is updating its image with modern holiday villages at Skegness



Anthea Turner meets Noddy as she relaunches the Butlin's camp as a family entertainment resort yesterday

though, will be visitors' response to the £40 million redevelopment at Skegness. Work is also being carried out to transform Butlin's resorts at Minehead and Bognor Regis in time for their relaunch next April.

More than £75 million has been spent on the three

Butlin's sites so far, and more than £10 million is being invested to develop new sub-tropical Splash waterworlds at the resorts. These will include whirlpool baths, wave pools and new giant water coaster rides in a complex with a year-round temperature of 30C. Each resort will have an

American-style bar, a restaurant with a cinema theme and an all-weather multisports centre.

Tony Marshall, managing director of Butlin's, claimed: "Butlin's family entertainment resorts will offer the British holidaymaker the ultimate year-round entertainment ex-

perience." The other two Butlin's holiday centres, at Ayr and Pwllheli, will operate their last season under the Butlin's name this year before they are transferred to another Rank company. Haven, to be transformed into "all-action holiday parks featuring modern mobile homes".

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ITN rebuked over nanny violence

BY CAROL MIDDLEY, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

ITN was censured by the Broadcasting Standards Council yesterday for showing film of children being ill-treated by their nannies on its early-evening news bulletin.

The council upheld complaints that the American footage of children being beaten, which was taken by hidden surveillance cameras, should not have been allowed on the 5.40pm programme. The scenes of violence were graphic and potentially distressing at a time when children were likely to be watching, it said.

ITN said it was a topical issue after the trial of the British au pair Louise Woodward and that a warning had been issued before the item was shown. Radio 1's *Breakfast Show*, hosted by Zoe

Ball and Kevin Greening, was criticised over "offensive and insulting" jokes concerning violence against women and sexual behaviour told by Shaun Ryder, singer with the pop group Black Grape.

The council rejected three complaints against the BBC debate show *Esther*, hosted by Esther Rantzen, in which an audience member offered money to a prostitute for sex in front of the camera. The complainants believed it should not have been broadcast before the 9pm watershed.

The council said that Ms Rantzen dealt with the "unexpected incident in a professional manner" and the programme was aimed at an adult audience.

Lead poison alert over antique plates

BY NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

PEOPLE who dine off the finest antique dishes have been given a health warning by scientists. Studies of old crockery have shown that lead levels are far higher than on modern dishes and plates.

Ralph Sheets, a chemist at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, tested crockery bought in antique shops and flea markets around America. Half of it, including Haviland Limoges from France and Roslyn china from Britain, exceeded limits for lead - which can hamper neurological development - laid down by the US Food and Drug Administration. Worst was a Japanese dish that was more than 250 times the limit.

The lead comes mainly

from the paints used to decorate the porcelain. The metal is released gradually as the paint reacts with atmospheric carbon dioxide and becomes dissolved in the thin layer of moisture that coats a plate even when it is apparently dry.

Dr Sheets, whose work is published in *The Science of the Total Environment*, warns people to refrain from eating off or preparing foods on old "ceramic ware". Modern plates are made using a different process and lead has been phased out.

"I grew up eating off these dishes and I don't think they caused me any harm," he says. "But some dishes are certainly unsafe if used all the time."

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The Millennium Dome is Blairism writ large. Times writers enter two more zones to examine the state we're in



Got it licked: Tony Banks, the best known Minister of Sport since Denis Howell

Conflicting promises keep NHS in intensive care

"Voyage into the human machine and learn how to get the best from it" - is Labour going to restore health to the NHS and keep its promise to cut waiting lists without providing the extra cash needed to do it?



By Ian Murray and Nigel Hawkes

Labour gave birth to the National Health Service 50 years ago and it has grown into one of the nation's favourite but sickest sons. Clever and caring, a gentle giant in shabby clothes, it suffers from chronic malnourishment. No matter how great the resources it consumes, it always seems weak and close to collapse.

Labour always insisted its beloved child became ill because it was meanly treated by Conservative foster parents, who starved it and restricted it with yards of red tape. Before the election the party's spin-doctors sat by the invalid's bedside and predicted an early death if it was not returned to the care of its natural parents.

Undoubtedly that diagnosis played a part in the Labour victory and a chorus of "healthcare's coming home" rang round the NHS as Frank Dobson was handed the mantle of Aneurin Bevan with orders to nurse the invalid back to health. It was the post Mr Dobson had always wanted, and his joy spread rapidly through the NHS, with goodwill immediately evident on all sides.

The "feel-good" factor did not last long. He had scarcely got his feet under the desk when he realised that he would be unable to keep one of the clearest promises of the Labour elec-

tion manifesto: waiting lists would not be cut by 100,000, in fact they would probably rise by at least as much. With hospitals everywhere going into the red, it was going to take a massive extra dose of resources to hold the line.

The waiting list promise thus ran into direct conflict with the most important election promise of all - Gordon Brown's undertaking to stay inside Conservative spending plans. The choice of Mr Dobson, instead of a "new Labour" face, for the Secretary of State post became clear. Mr Dobson, who would obviously love to write a blank cheque to bail out the NHS, had the old Labour credentials needed to be able to say no and still show that he cared.

He had it easy for the first few weeks, doing away with the hated internal market which made hospitals and doctors compete for business. Nurses cheered him as he scrapped local pay deals. He pleaded his case for extra money so well that the Iron Chancellor found an extra £1.2 billion within two

months of the election. Another £300 million followed to ease the winter crisis and then £500 million extra, earmarked for the waiting lists, came in the last Budget.

There was an enthusiastic reception in the medical professions for the health White Paper, which proposed to transfer the emphasis of care from hospitals to GPs, and for a Green Paper that aimed to change lifestyles to reduce illness.

Then came the public-sector pay review and the Chancellor got his own back. Nurses and doctors, like all public-sector workers, had their pay settlement staged. Although personally Mr Dobson retains affection, disillusionment and suspicion about the Government he serves is spreading among NHS workers.

Cutting bureaucracy may have saved £100 million this year but that is less than the NHS needs to function each day. Health service managers have given warning that the big changes set

out in the White Paper cannot work if managers have been sacked to reduce red-tape expense. And all the time waiting lists continue to grow. Mr Dobson has promised that by this time next year they will be at the same level as before the election. The chartered accountants Chantry Vellacott estimate that even with the extra money Mr Dobson has promised from the Chancellor, waiting lists will be 500,000 higher by 1999 than at the time of the election. The accountants calculate that bringing them down to pre-election levels will require at least £3 billion more.

Shortage of cash has also soured Labour's relations with the scientific world. Scientists had high hopes that the party would reverse the decline in science spending that occurred under the Tories. Since the election victory they have had the right mood music, but none of the money.

John Battle is an energetic Science Minister who tries to make up for the lack of hard cash with enthusiasm. In terms of policy there have been no changes - all the Tory policies have been followed. Tony Blair has reconstructed an advisory committee on science, but nobody expects it to make much difference.

The millennium bug has been tackled by sacking the Tory choice to take on the bug and establishing a new initiative to alert the nation to the problem. But the new committee has yet to appoint a chief executive. Months have been lost without solid advances.

Football crazy, football mad, Blair's team acts the lad



By Philip Delves Broughton

"Find out how leisure can re-activate your life" - can the Government ride a wave of sporting success?

When England's cricketers whipped Australia in the first Ashes Test last summer, it seemed the new dawn had reached even the hopeless cause of English cricket. And the new Government, unlike the old one, did not even like cricket.

Spin-doctors and spin-bowlers, politics and play, not since the Earl of Rosebery's horse won the Derby while he was Prime Minister in the late 19th century have these two forces of British life been so intertwined.

If England's and Scotland's footballers have a good World Cup in France this summer, the Government is ready to ride piggy-back on their success, just as Harold Wilson did to such effect in 1966.

Right from the start, new Labour realised that its ultimate victory rested as much on a cultural, as a political, shift in the country. Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair could dip unhindered in the brain tub of popular culture: a bit of football here, the River Café cookbook there, a flirty frock by Stella McCartney, a dash of Oasis, a seasoning of Sir Terence Conran and Damien Hirst, and just for good measure a rave song. *Things Can Only Get Better*, to keep everyone's pecker up. New Labour was not just serious about work, it was serious about their play.

The Tories, by contrast, were still listening to Lord Lloyd-Webber's adaptation of Purlie, wearing V-necked sweaters to show they were relaxed and stuck with a wine and cheese vision of a good night out.

Physical fitness has also played a major part in Blair's public image. With Alastair Campbell, Gordon Brown, John Prescott and Blair there has been a robust physicality about new Labour's first team which showed up the wheezy boys and sick notes of the Tory opposition.

Even Peter Mandelson has done his bit for British Labour, compensating for his reputation as a balletomane with regular visits to the gym, mountain-walking holidays with John Birt, the Director-General of the BBC, and some snaky gyrating down at the

Ministry of Sound, London's biggest nightclub.

Despite a fresh lease of life for the tennis court at Chesham, however, football has been new Labour's game. As his first party conference as leader, in 1995, Mr Blair and Kevin Keegan headed a football around a Brighton school playground. Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, was wheeled out as a Labour supporter, and in Tuscany last year the Prime Minister was photographed, all sweaty and manful, with a bunch of local policemen after a five-a-side game.

Where Kennedy's Camelot played touch American football in the White House garden, the No 10 policy unit fields a football team with a woman. Liz Lloyd, the PM's adviser on home affairs, anchoring the midfield.

So obsessed is the new Government with football, that it managed to forget John Major's beloved cricket when making plans for the new national sports academy, an omission that had quickly to be rectified.

The appointment of Tony Banks as Sports Minister, which started out badly when he suggested that all foreign players playing football in England should be eligible for the England team and likened William Hague to a "foetus", has since turned out fine, with Banks now the best known Sports Minister since Denis Howell and spoken of as a potential Mayor of London.

Meanwhile, the shires have been pacified by the suppression of Mike Foster's anti-hunting Bill, which was sat upon by a Labour high command unwilling to waste political capital on so minor an issue.

An Easter break in Spain saw the Prime Minister stay with the flamenco guitarist Paco Peña and visit Real Madrid's fabled Bernabeu stadium, mixing music and football once more.

Perhaps the biggest advantage of all for Tony Blair, however, has been having three young children to bring up. For good or bad, raising children seems to have become the ultimate in modern leisure activities. It involves play but is also fundamentally serious.

And it is also something to which William Hague, so far, has no answer.

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Tourists warned of poisoned food after dam burst

FROM GILES TREMLETT IN MADRID

TOURISTS visiting southwest Spain have been warned to beware of poisoned foodstuffs after the spillage of a billion gallons of highly toxic mining waste into rivers around the Doñana National Park. The warning came as owners of the mine that caused the toxic spill near the town of Aznalcóllar were said to have asked the authorities for permission to release a further 400 million gallons of acid waste into local rivers so that they could mend the dam that burst on Saturday. Scientists and consumer groups have said that poisonous elements contained in the water, including mercury, lead and zinc, will find their way into local produce. Consumer groups have recommended that visitors to the provinces of Cádiz, Seville and Huelva do not buy fruit, vegetables, fish or seafood



Flamingos on the Guadalquivir marshlands near the threatened Doñana National Park in Spain yesterday. Below, a white stork found dead in the park is carried away

from the region's multitude of illegal street and roadside vendors. "We are worried that produce that has not been passed as fit by the authorities will be sold this way," Francisco Sánchez, spokesman for a consumer's group in Andalucía said. About 5,000 acres of farmland has been covered by the toxic sludge left behind by the escaping dam water. A government scientist confirmed yesterday that it was likely the heavy metals in the waste spilt by the Los Frailes zinc and lead mines at Aznalcóllar eventually would make their way into food. "The underground aquifers can feed them to plants and these in turn can pass them on to domestic animals and human beings," Manuel Repeto, director of a toxicological institute in Seville, said. The British Embassy in

Madrid said yesterday that it was watching the situation in Doñana and would be talking to local authorities, scientists and consumer groups. "We will make recommendations shortly," an official said. Officials of the regional Andalusian government, responsible for checking the safety of the dam at Aznalcóllar, said yesterday that there was nothing for consumers to worry about. "People can rest assured that produce from the area is being perfectly controlled," Paulino Plata, the head of the regional agriculture department, said. Officials were also carrying out half-hourly checks on the quality of the waters at the mouth of the River Guadalquivir, where nearly 1,000 small boats collect fish and seafood. Fishing was continuing in the river mouth at Sanlúcar de Barrameda yesterday even though part of the waste was reported to have moved through its waters. Environmentalists have said that long-term damage may be done by heavy metals deposited on the riverbed where many species breed and feed. Consumer groups urged the

Government to apply the strictest measures to local produce. "Too often in Spain we are told there is no problem, only to find out, after there was a problem," José María Múgica, of the country's main consumer group, the Organisation of Consumers, said. The consumer groups said that the problem would worsen over time because the waste water seeped into underground aquifers and spread to other zones where fruit and vegetables crops are irrigated from deep wells. The provinces of Cádiz, Seville and Huelva are popu-

lar with British tourists keen to avoid the crowds of the nearby Costa del Sol. The city of Seville is especially popular during the April Fair, which started on Monday and lasts until May 3. Hundreds of workers gathered 20 tonnes of dead fish in and around the Doñana National Park yesterday in an attempt to stop them being eaten by some of the quarter of a million birds living in the wetlands. No attempt has been made yet to shift the toxic sludge that covers the valley floor for about 20 miles along the

course of the River Guadalquivir above the nature reserve. Anders Bulow, chairman of the Swedish-Canadian mining group that owns Los Frailes, visited the mine yesterday and promised to help in the clean-up after the disaster. He said the company's insurance should cover any costs incurred by the company as a result of the spill. Mr Bulow has said that a "seismic shift" was responsible for the disaster. A local geological institute said it had not recorded any earth movements.



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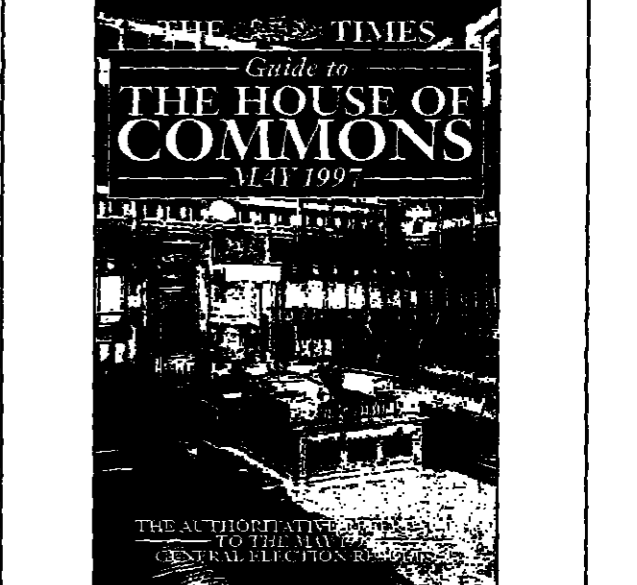
Rock hails offer of talks by Madrid

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

THE Gibraltar Government has accepted a Spanish offer to start direct talks before the summer on the future of the British territory, but it rejects outright a Madrid plan for sharing sovereignty, Peter Caruana, the Chief Minister, said yesterday. Mr Caruana hailed as a landmark the new proposal by Madrid to talk to the territory's elected administration rather than to the British Government. The first round is likely to start within months, he said. "We are very happy to meet... provided it is on an open agenda basis," Mr Caruana said. "The concept of a Spanish Gibraltar now or in the future is unacceptable." Mr Caruana signalled strong concern over Britain's willingness to discuss Spain's proposal, made last December, for a period of shared sovereignty lasting up to a century but leading Gibraltar to the status of an autonomous Spanish region. Abel Matutes, the Spanish Foreign Minister,

claimed after Anglo-Spanish talks last week that Britain had agreed to consider giving up sovereignty over the Rock, which was ceded to Britain in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. The Government insisted that it would do nothing against the wishes of the 30,000 inhabitants. Many suspect, however, that the Blair administration is keen to resolve the long-standing quarrel, which continues to strain ties with Spain and disrupt EU business. In 1967, 99 per cent of Gibraltar's inhabitants voted to remain under British rule. Mr Caruana, who was in Brussels to press complaints over what his Government sees as flagrant Spanish breaches of EU law in its dealings with the territory, said: "The people of Gibraltar are clear that they do not wish to be part of the Spanish state. The UK position is no transfer of sovereignty without the consent of the people, so there seems no reason not to reject the Spanish proposals."

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Fears grow for Serb villagers in Kosovo

By TOM WALKER

FEARS are mounting for eight Serb villagers in Kosovo territory controlled by ethnic Albanian guerrillas. Reliable sources said they believed at least two had been killed, but the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) yesterday guaranteed the safety of civilians, and demanded its inclusion in peace talks.

In a statement timed to coincide with the mediation meeting in Rome of the four-nation Contact Group for Yugoslavia, the UCK threatened violence for as long as Serb "invaders" were in Kosovo. There is growing evidence that the shadowy army has a hardline element from across the border in Albania and that it is prepared to abandon the pacifist policies extolled by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the main Albanian political party in the province. "Any agreement without us will not be valid and will be

punished," the statement said of peace talks with Belgrade. "We call on the government of Kosovo to give us money for national liberation. Cowards of defeatism and anarchy should leave." The last sentence was said to refer to Ibrahim Rugova, the LDK leader often likened to Gandhi, who has never admitted links to the UCK.

The missing Serbs live in villages east of the highway from Pec to Dakovica, a triangle of territory surrounded

by Serbian police and the Yugoslav Army.

An Orthodox priest in the area, attempting to mediate with the Albanians, said he feared Serbs were being taken to an alleged UCK command centre in the village of Glogjane and being tortured.

"I saw the bruises of one man detained there myself," he said. "It is very worrisome." He recounted how three brothers returned to the village to find food for their cattle, only for their house to

be surrounded by UCK guerrillas. "They were attacked from all sides," he said. "They were kicked even by their former neighbours."

Reporters who yesterday found tracks circumventing UCK lines of defence were confronted by fighters very different from those nearer the Serb positions. They wore orange-flecked uniforms with black masks bearing the UCK badge and carried new Kalashnikovs. Their accents were said to be typical of northern Albania.

Prishtina: Serbian police shot dead a man, 26, and wounded three others after the funeral of three Albanian guerrilla suspects in southwest Kosovo, ethnic Albanian journalists said. Western journalists at the scene said they heard machinegun fire. Local reports said masked and armed men, thought to belong to the Kosovo Liberation Army, appeared at the funeral. (Reuters)

Albania Nato appeal

Rome: Albania yesterday signalled its growing alarm over the slide to war in Kosovo by appealing to Nato to deploy troops on its territory to stop the conflict spilling over (Richard Owen writes).

Fatos Nano, the Albanian Prime Minister, made his appeal in a letter to Lamberto Dini, the Italian Foreign Min-

ister, as the major powers met in Rome to review the crisis.

Mr Nano said: "The situation in Kosovo leads us to think that the presence of Nato in Albania is greatly needed as a factor of pressure and security against the conflict." He said reports suggested "a danger of large-scale confrontation".



Shpresa Prekadini—once Margaret Cook of Glasgow—with her husband Halim. Mrs Prekadini believes she is the only Briton living in Kosovo. She will never leave, but "never has it been quite as bad as just now"

Love leads Glaswegian to Albanian Celtic fringe

FROM TOM WALKER IN PRIZREN

IN 1965 Margaret Cook, a Scottish translator, fell in love with an Albanian doctor studying in Germany. Thirty-five years later she finds herself the only Briton living in Serbia's war-ravaged province of Kosovo.

It is an odyssey Ms Cook—now known by her Muslim Albanian name of Shpresa Prekadini—could scarcely have imagined as she grew up in a Glasgow suburb, the daughter of an engineer. Now integrated into the Albanian culture, she knows she will never leave. Along with her husband Halim—the ear, nose and throat surgeon for the southern border town of Prizren—Mrs Prekadini, 57, is completely absorbed in her people's struggle.

Sitting in a rocking chair in the couple's second-floor flat, covered by a shawl in accordance with her adopted faith, she admitted that life in Kosovo is unpredictable. "Now and again it is been pretty bad, but never quite as bad as just now," she said, a Scottish accent undiminished by the years.

The British Embassy in Belgrade has contacted her occasionally, usually with advice to fill the bath or top up the car petrol tank. "A few weeks ago they phoned and said they thought I might be leaving, and I said 'no'. There are so many things here that

people have lost back in Britain."

In particular she refers to the family values that make Albanians such a close-knit community. Although her husband, Halim, worked in Germany when younger, he always knew that one day it was his duty to return to his native Kosovo. So it was no surprise when two doctors from Prizren arrived in Heidelberg to tell him that his hour had come.

"He had a terrific salary in Germany, but we are some of the more lucky ones," Mrs Prekadini said. In time the couple expect their middle child, Vetron, a hearing aid specialist, to return from Germany to Kosovo.

During a short visit to the Prekadini household a bewildering number of relations and friends pass in and out. The past week has been especially busy, with many calling to pay their condolences over the death of Dr Prekadini's sister.

"Quite a few Serbs have come to say they are sorry. Just think of it: they do that and there is meant to be a war breaking out. There is nowhere quite like this place," Mrs Prekadini said.

The couple sometimes travel to Turkey, but have never been to Albania, just ten miles down the road. Despite the current tension, many things

are better now than when they arrived—in the communist days of President Tito, Corn Flakes and ketchup were unknown. Today the traders of Prizren have made it one of the region's richest towns, although many Albanians remain unemployed under the Serb regime.

"If it wasn't for the diaspora, people would be dying in the streets," Mrs Prekadini said. "Former teachers are selling cigarettes, and some work for free just in the hope of getting a pension. I don't know how they survive."

Mrs Prekadini taught English for 14 years in the town—"I did my bit for Kosovo"—but is now a full-time housewife.

Her husband recently made a pilgrimage to Mecca and Mrs Prekadini, born into a non-practising Protestant family, hopes to follow suit. She stays in touch with her sister in Kingussie in the Highlands and last month was in London with her two daughters. The eldest, Lyria, works as a companion to Lady Menubin.

Mrs Prekadini says the Celtic and Albanian Illyrian ancestries are linked and sees herself as another in a great line of Scottish explorers. "We are adaptable and we live all over the world," she said. "Apart from politics, this is a great place to live."

Yeltsin puts business tycoon back in Cabinet

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

BORIS BEREZOVSKY, the business magnate and political veteran, was reinstated in President Yeltsin's administration yesterday as Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the loose political and economic alliance of 12 former Soviet republics.

At first sight the move appeared to show Mr Berzovsky's return to favour after his sacking by Mr Yeltsin last November as Deputy Secretary of the policy-making Security Council. He was known to have maintained political influence in the Kremlin and was widely reported to have played a role in Mr Yeltsin's decision to dismiss Viktor Chernomyrdin, his former Prime Minister, and the entire Government last month.

Since then, however, Mr Yeltsin is reported to have lost patience with Mr Berzovsky's meddling. Yesterday's appointment may have taken into account the fact that the CIS is based in Minsk, and would keep him away from Moscow.

However, the appointment is also in keeping with Mr Yeltsin's favoured policy of balancing political rivals. Mr Berzovsky's appointment coincided with the confirmation of Boris Nemtsov, one of his strongest critics, as a Deputy Prime Minister and the effective number two in the Government.

The remaining positions in the Cabinet, including that of a third Deputy Prime Minister, are expected to be announced today.



Domenico Gramazio, top right, is restrained after yesterday's Italian parliamentary clash

Italian football row spills into assembly

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

FOOTBALL-MAD Italian MPs supporting rival teams exchanged blows and insults in the normally austere parliament building in Rome yesterday.

The fighting erupted over an alleged conspiracy by referees to nobble the international star Ronaldo on behalf of Gianni Agnelli, the Fiat industrial magnate known as the uncrowned king of Italy.

Earlier, Walter Veltroni, the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Sport, reported on a meeting he had held with Luciano Nizzola, the Italian National Soccer Federation (FIGC) President.

The talks concerned eight contested decisions in which referees have been accused of perverting justice to ensure the first division is topped by Juventus of Turin, the team owned by Signor Agnelli. In the most controversial incident in Tur-

in on Sunday, the player Ronaldo and Massimo Moratti, his billionaire chairman at the Internazionale of Milan club, claimed that the referee denied inter a blatant penalty and moments later gave one to Juventus.

Signor Veltroni, a Juventus fan, assured parliamentarians the refereeing system would be changed.

But pandemonium erupted when Domenico Gramazio, a "post-Fascist" National Alliance MP, screamed of the nation's referees: "They all are thieves—paid by Fiat." He then rushed at Massimo Mauro, of the former communist Democratic Left, who is a former Juventus player.

Order was restored as ushers cleared the chamber. Signor Gramazio was suspended from parliament for 16 days.

Gingrich at 'cover' by White

Britain condemn Abacha plot trial

Dominic faces prosecution

Clinton veto Bill

Sudanese famine 'hope'

Jeff Graf's father free

Costa Rica has no regre

Basque dogs bite back

مكتبة من الأصل

Gingrich hits out at 'cover-up' by White House

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

NEWT GINGRICH lambasted President Clinton for taking part in "the most systematic, deliberate cover-up... we have ever seen in American history". It was the strongest attack yet on Democrats by a leading Republican.

The House Speaker vowed: "I will never again, as long as I am Speaker, make a speech without commenting" on the White House's failure to tell the truth and observe the law.

The declaration brought an end to the Republicans' silence on the Monica Lewinsky sex-and-perjury scandal. The unusual salvo was triggered by congressional Democrats' efforts to derail inquiries into the saga and into separate allegations of murky fundraising practices.

Mr Gingrich said, "The American people have the right to expect that the rule of law will prevail, that no one is above the law."

The White House retorted that Mr Gingrich's speech to GOPac, the Republican lobby group he once led, was "a rank partisan political attack" aimed at drumming up cash for the congressional elections.

Mr Clinton said: "There is enough negative political talk in Washington every single day without the President adding to it."

The immediate target of Mr Gingrich's ire is Democrats on the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee who prevented four witnesses in a campaign finance inquiry from receiving immunity from prosecution in return for their testimony. Henry Waxman, the most senior Democrat on the

publican-headed committee, said the group blocked the immunity deal, even though the Justice Department had approved it, because they had no faith in the "partisan and reckless" investigation.

Mr Gingrich also accused the President of encouraging his staff to smear the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, who is heading many separate inquiries into the Clintons' conduct in Arkansas and Washington.

"If he doesn't want to fire Ken Starr, he should tell his staff to shut up," he said. "I am sickened by how unpatriotically they undermine the Constitution of the United States".



James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, announcing the pact yesterday in Washington: "This decision is a gift to the Brazilian people and the world"

Global pact saves 62m acres of Amazon forest

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

AN AREA of Amazonian rainforest the size of the United Kingdom is to be saved from loggers, development and slash-and-burn agriculture of the sort that has triggered recent devastating fires.

Under a deal announced yesterday in London and Washington by the World Bank, the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Government of Brazil, 62 million acres of rainforest will be declared a protected area.

Andrew Rogerson, the British representative of the World Bank in London, said estimates for the cost of the project ranged from £30 million to £200 million. "These are not World Bank estimates I should stress, but this is not going to be peanuts."

The protected areas will be funded by a mixture of soft loans or cash from the Global Environment Facility set up by nations including Britain in the wake of the Rio Earth Summit of 1992.

The announcement marks the first fruit of an alliance

between the WWF and the bank unveiled at Rio 11 in New York last June to protect a network of forests around the globe. Two thirds of the world's original forest cover has been lost. In the past three months the Brazilian Amazon, home to an estimated tenth of the world's plant and animal species, has lost through fire an area of cover the size of Belgium.

The alliance aims to get 125 million acres into new protected areas by 2005, along with 500 million acres of working forests brought within independent certification schemes.

The bank, revived by green groups for funding environmentally damaging projects such as dams and roads, has been reforming its lending policies.

James Wolfensohn, the president of the bank, said yesterday: "This decision will help to preserve the abundant biodiversity in this remarkable tropical region. It is a true gift to the Brazilian people and the world."

WORLD IN BRIEF

Britain condemns Abacha plot trial

London: Britain condemned Nigeria yesterday for refusing to respect the civil rights of the six men sentenced to death for plotting to overthrow General Sani Abacha, the African nation's military ruler (Helen Rumbelow writes).

The trial of Oladipo Diya, General Abacha's former deputy, and his alleged conspirators was not conducted according to international conventions on human rights, which include a right to an appeal, pardon and choice of lawyer, the Foreign Office said. "We're very concerned that the trials are fair, free and open and we are not happy that this trial was conducted mainly in private," a spokesman said. Lieutenant-General Diya was sentenced on Tuesday after claiming at his trial that he had been framed. Before facing the firing squad the sentences of all six must be ratified by General Abacha's military council.

Dumas faces prosecution



Paris: Roland Dumas, left, the former French Foreign Minister, was placed under legal investigation on suspicion of corruption in connection with an arms shipment to Taiwan (Ben Macintyre writes). As head of the French Constitutional Council, M Dumas, 75, is the most senior legal official in France and the decision to proceed with an investigation, which could lead to a full-scale prosecution, will increase pressure for his resignation. Magistrates are investigating allegations that a close friend of M Dumas, Christine Deviers-Jonecour, received an inflated salary as part of the 1991 deal to sell six missile-carrying frigates to Taiwan for Fr14 billion (£1.4 billion). M Dumas, then Foreign Minister, has denied being influenced by her and says he did not profit from the deal.

Clinton to veto UN Bill

Washington: President Clinton is certain to veto a Bill that would pay nearly \$1 billion (£600 million) owed to the United Nations because it would also block US aid for international family planning (Bronwen Maddox writes). The Senate approved the Bill by 51 votes to 49, including clauses banning aid to groups that lobby for abortion rights, which were added by House Republicans. Mr Clinton, who badly wants the US to make good its UN arrears, has said he will not sign it if it includes the anti-abortion clause. Republican leaders said that Mr Clinton would not have a second chance to pay the UN bill.

Sudanese famine 'hope'

London: Babies have begun to die from malnutrition in Sudan, but a major famine can still be avoided, aid agencies say (Helen Rumbelow writes). A third of the 350,000 in need of food are children. Marie Staunton, deputy director of Unicef in Britain, said: "Babies are always the first to go in a famine, but at the moment we have everything to play for to reduce the death toll." Oxfam said pictures of emaciated men shown on television were not typical of the area. *Leading article, page 25*

Steffi Graf's father freed

Bonn: Peter Graf, right, the father of German tennis star Steffi Graf, has been freed from a German prison after the remainder of his sentence for tax evasion was suspended. He had served slightly more than half of the sentence of three years and nine months. The court said it was confident that Graf, convicted of evading DM12 million (£4 million) tax on his daughter's earnings, would not reoffend. (Reuters)



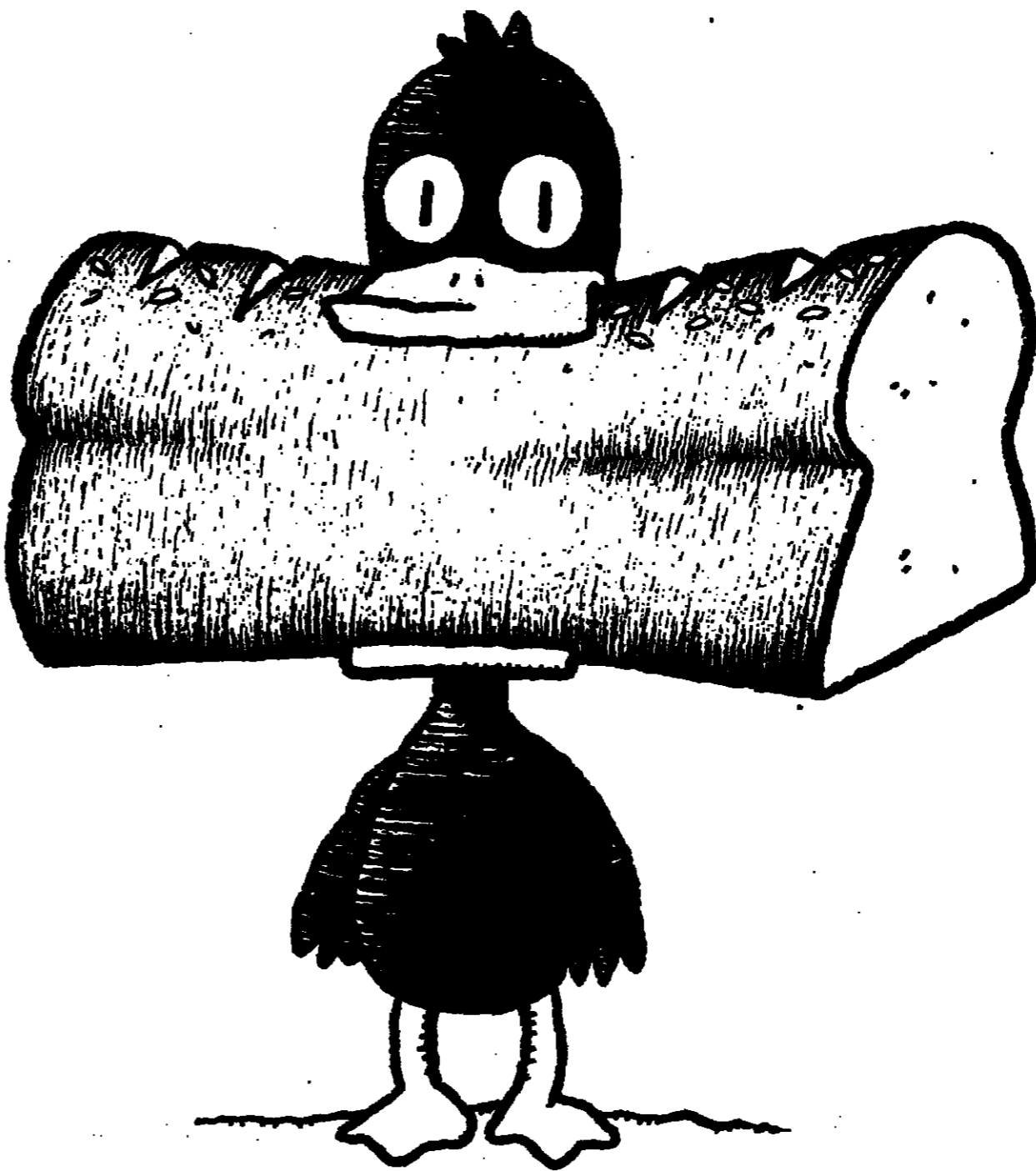
Costa Rica has no regrets

San José: Costa Rica celebrated the 50th anniversary of the abolition of its army, which made the small tropical nation the most peaceful and prosperous in Central America. The outgoing President, José María Figueres, unveiled a statue of his father, José Figueres Ferrer, whose victory in a civil war on April 28, 1948, led to the dissolution of the armed forces. While many of Costa Rica's neighbours plunged into guerrilla wars in the 1980s, the "Switzerland of Central America" avoided bloodshed. (Reuters)

Sausage dogs bite back

Bratislava: For more than 100 years the central Slovak village of Valaska celebrated carnival by eating dogmeat sausages. This year the homemade delicacy poisoned almost 200 people in a community of 3,900, with nearly half the victims being taken to hospital suffering from the parasite trichinella, whose larvae eat muscles. At first villagers thought they just had bad flu. The only death looks likely to be the ancient tradition itself, which included sending the foodstuff away to relations and celebrities. No one wants to eat dogmeat sausages again. (AP)

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Guerrilla chief to head army in South Africa

FROM SAM KILLEY IN JOHANNESBURG

A FORMER guerrilla whose brother was killed by white soldiers, and who had a prominent part in planning African National Congress (ANC) bomb attacks on civilian targets, was yesterday appointed the first black leader of the South African armed forces.

Lieutenant-General Siphwe Nyanda will take over from General Georg Meiring in June, heralding a trying time for professional Afrikaner officers, who form the backbone of Africa's most formidable war machine. The former fighter with Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) was trained in the former East Germany and the Soviet Union as a platoon commander, artilleryman and in intelligence to serve in the ANC armed wing.

General Meiring was asked to retire after blunders that led him to warn Nelson Mandela of a fictitious plan, naming General Nyanda among the plotters, to overthrow the Government. The intelligence briefing General Meiring presented to President Mandela also named Michael Jackson, the pop singer, as a kingpin.

The bizarre twists that led to General Nyanda's appointment are likely to be met with derision by some white officers who served in the apartheid-era armed forces and have insisted that the guerrillas would have been no match for them in a straight fight.

General Constand Viljoen, leader of the right-wing Freedom Front party and a former chief of the South African Defence Force, said yesterday that General Nyanda's greatest challenge would be to win the respect and loyalty of all members of the South African National Defence Force. General Viljoen, who commanded frontline troops during the

South African invasion of Angola, dismissed the appointment of General Nyanda as an example of positive discrimination.

"It comes as no surprise to me, but we wish him well... There will be no problem among whites working for a black commander. We did it before [in joint operations with Angolan rebels], and so long as the man knew what he was doing, there was no problem at all," General Viljoen said.

The military threat posed by ANC guerrillas to the apartheid regime after the 1976 Soweto uprisings (when General Nyanda left a job as a sports journalist and went into exile to join the struggle) was less dramatic than the danger of popular rebellion. But General Nyanda, who rose swiftly through the ranks, was famous for running tight-knit guerrilla units, which took comparatively low casualties.

"I am conscious of the heavy

responsibility it places on my shoulders. I pledge to return the trust shown in me by serving the Government and the people of South Africa with unflinching loyalty, dedication, and to the very best of my ability," General Nyanda said yesterday.

By 1979, when the guerrillas were beginning to infiltrate South African townships successfully, General Nyanda was appointed commissar of the Transvaal region and "urban machinery", which he ran until 1986. Among his operations were the car bombing of Church Street, Pretoria, in which four people were killed, and the bombing of the Johannesburg magistrates courts, which killed three policemen.

His brother, Zwelakhe, was killed by the security forces of the former government in a cross-border raid into Swaziland in 1983. Yesterday he said he felt nothing personal about the past.

General Nyanda, 47, who was born in Soweto and graduated from high school but was expelled from university for political activities, has been finishing his military education in South African staff colleges since 1996. In 1997 he was appointed General Meiring's deputy.

A lifelong member of the ANC, he served on the National Executive Committee from 1991 until he joined the newly integrated South African National Defence Force, which blended 16,000 former black guerrillas with their former enemies.

He still sports guerrilla-style olive drab uniforms on formal occasions. Earlier this year he attended the state opening of parliament by Mr Mandela wearing his unbadged beret on top of his head in the manner preferred by African bush fighters.



Nyanda: planned ANC attacks on civilians



Madeleine Albright is given a guided tour of Beijing's Film Studios yesterday by Chen Kaige, the director

Dissident vanishes as Albright forges new US links to China

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

THE apparent arrest of a leader of China's suppressed 1989 democracy movement came as an embarrassment to Beijing yesterday as Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State, spoke of building "a new strategic relationship" between the United States and China.

News of the disappearance of Wang Youcai came during the second stage of Mrs Albright's Asian tour. He vanished two days after arriving in the Chinese capital for the centenary of Beijing University, informants said, leading to the conclusion that he was in police custody. Last night security around the university was increased.

In recent days, China has also sentenced a rock singer and a businessman to three years in a labour camp for telling foreign human rights

groups about the detention of four dissident poets, a Hong Kong human rights group said.

Among Mrs Albright's negotiating goals are human rights, trade, arms control — particularly missile technology — and an effort to discover whether China provided Pakistan with the means to construct a new medium-range missile system, officials said.

Talks were also taking place to prepare for President Clinton's Beijing visit in two months' time, the first by a US leader since the violent suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests in June 1989.

Tibet is another subject which Mrs Albright will pursue in talks continuing today with Zhu Rongji, China's new Prime Minister, and Jiang Zemin, the Communist Party

leader. Paving the way for the presidential summit in China, Mrs Albright yesterday signed an agreement for a "hotline" to link the White House with Zhongnanhai, seat of the Chinese leadership, as agreed at the previous Sino-American summit in Washington in October last year.

Mrs Albright is keen to see the Chinese fulfil their pledge to sign the United Nations Covenant on Human Rights, and take further steps on the issue of thousands of political prisoners languishing in jails and labour camps.

Yesterday Tang Jiaxuan, the Foreign Minister, did not mention human rights, but highlighted some "uncertain factors", especially Taiwan, which China considers a renegade province. He called the island, to which Washington still sells arms, the "most sensitive core issue" in relations between China and the US.

Ten die in sales ban riots

Beijing: The nationwide ban on all forms of direct and pyramid selling, for fear that they challenge the Communist Party's monopoly on power, has led to rioting in central China in which ten people have been killed and more than 100 injured, officials said yesterday (James Pringle writes).

In the city of Xiang Jia Jie, in Hunan, six people have

died since rioting broke out last week. Authorities had to call in reinforcements to quell the mobs. "This is a relatively serious problem," one official said with unusual frankness.

In Hunan's Hengyang city, thousands of sales staff of direct selling firms attacked and killed four employees. The central Cabinet banned all forms of direct selling to curb get-rich-quick schemes.

Imelda Marcos gives up election challenge

FROM ABBY TAN IN MANILA

IMELDA MARCOS announced yesterday her withdrawal from next month's presidential election in the Philippines, thus reducing the crowded field to ten candidates.

The 67-year-old widow of Ferdinand Marcos, the late President, said she was quitting the race "before the situation explodes to an extremely violent election". A polling official had predicted violence and cheating in some areas.

The Filipinos are to elect a leader on May 11 to succeed President Ramos.

Opinion polls give Mrs Marcos little chance of winning. But in a crowded field that prevents the winner from gaining a majority, Mrs Marcos's candidacy was thought to affect the chances of the two front-runners, Vice-President Joseph Estrada and House Speaker Jose de Venecia, who is backed by Mr Ramos.

Both candidates had earlier asked her to withdraw and to support their individual attempts instead.

Mrs Marcos still commands support from a marginalised group of loyalists in the capital, Manila, and in her late husband's home province in the north.

President Marcos was overthrown in a 1986 popular revolt after ruling the Philippines for 20 years. The regime was known for extravagant spending and widespread corruption.

Although Mrs Marcos said she had not decided which candidate she would now support, she is known to be closer to Mr Estrada, a Marcos ally for many years.

Two days earlier, Mrs Marcos had hinted in an interview that she might withdraw, although she denied she was seeking a pardon from the next President — for a 1995 conviction for graft. She is out on bail pending appeal.

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Partial view of a British Gentlemen advertisement on the right edge of the page.

Large advertisement for the Ford Galaxy car, featuring a dark image of the vehicle and the text "TRAVEL FIRST CLASS".

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Call to censor dance mars jubilee show

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

CELEBRATIONS to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Israel opened last night, dogged by discord to the last as religious and secular Jews wrangled furiously over the £4 million variety show centrepiece.

Israel Radio said intense efforts to find a compromise were under way after ultra-Orthodox Jews threatened to demonstrate against the performance — due to be staged in Jerusalem tonight in front of Al Gore, the American Vice-President — unless changes were made to an act involving scantily-clad dancers.

In response, many of the artists in the show threatened a boycott if the organisers censored the act involving the Batseva dance troupe. One secular Israeli suggested that the name of the show be changed from "Jubilee Bells" to "Tehran Bells".

At the same time, right-wing Jews and left-wing peace campaigners announced separate demonstrations at the disputed Jewish settlement of Har Homa in east Jerusalem, work on which began in March last year triggering a continuing deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

Yediot Aharonot, the Tel Aviv daily, reported that religious factions in the 120-seat Knesset had demanded cancellation of the dance troupe's performance because it "expresses overt and intentional contempt for the sensibilities of the religious public".

Members of the National Religious Party, a key supporter of the ruling right-wing coalition led by Benjamin Netanyahu, appealed to the Prime Minister's adviser on



religious affairs to scrap the routine, which they said was "an insult not only to the religious sector, but to the dignity of the Jewish nation at large".

Yediot said: "The religious were incensed by part of the performance called Who Knows One, in which the dancers strip off their clothes and remain wearing see-through shirts and short pants. The show, which has already been seen by some 150,000 spectators, has been incorporated into a number of official programmes."

In a separate protest, ultra-Orthodox representatives in the Jerusalem Municipality demanded that an impersonation of Ovadia Yosef, a leading rabbi, by a member of the team that produces the Israeli television equivalent of Spitting Image be dropped, and a prayer for the safety of the state be included. "Religious delegates issued threats

that... they would take demonstrators to the show — due to be televised live — and disrupt the performance," said Yediot, which added that Shaike Levy, chairman of the Israel Artists Organisation, called on other performers to boycott the show if the dance routine was censored.

"We cannot let censorship in through the back door," Mr Levy said. "If the artists of Israel have pride, they have to say 'This will not be'."

The deep divisions between religious and secular Jews have overshadowed every aspect of the anniversary, with some ultra-Orthodox Jews threatening a protest march in their Jerusalem quarter against the foundation of Israel in 1948. Members of the Natorei Karta sect believe the state arose with an anti-religious base and refer to the celebrations as "the power of the devil".

Even before the latest row, the jubilee had been plagued by in-fighting and bad management, with three separate chiefs of the organising committee resigning in quick succession. Israel's leading singer, Rita, had refused to perform the national anthem Hatikva (The Hope) at to-

night's concert after an outcry over her demand for a £12,000 fee. She agreed to change her mind only after a telephone call from Mr Netanyahu and a compromise in which the money will go to charity.

The lavish stage production will include a video review of Israel's history. However, despite protests from peace campaigners, it will not show the historic 1993 White House handshake between the late Yitzhak Rabin, then Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

The event was also left out of television jubilee promotional films showing other handshakes celebrating peace with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. "I personally will not allow Arafat to be in any way connected with the jubilee celebrations," Doron Shmueli, the director of the Jubilee Committee, was quoted by Haaretz, the Tel Aviv paper, as saying.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, many of them refugees from the land that became Israel 50 years ago today, have been barred from entering the Jewish state until Saturday night for security reasons. Many plan to mark May 14, the day the British mandate gave way to the Israeli state, with protests against what they term Al Nagbah (The Catastrophe).

Agent baited: Israel paid about £1.2 million bail for a Mossad agent caught by Swiss authorities during a bungled spy operation, a Swiss official said. The agent returned to Israel over the weekend after the Israeli Government paid bail and guaranteed he would appear for trial in Switzerland. (AP)

Leading article, page 25

Memorial opens rift between sacred and profane

By TIM HAMES

FOR the vast majority of Israelis, the ceremonies that surrounded Memorial Day yesterday were a time of private and solemn remembrance. For the two factions in Israel who most detest each other, the ultra-secular Meretz Party and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities, it offered another opportunity to exercise their mutual loathing. The two sides came to blows at a graveyard outside Jerusalem yesterday.

The latest controversy concerned the Government's decision to ask Meir Porush, the Deputy Housing Minister, to represent it at a ceremony honouring the military dead at Holon cemetery. Mr Porush is a member of the United Torah Judaism Party whose ultra-Orthodox supporters, the Haredim, usually refuse to serve in the Israeli Army and are officially exempted.

This refusal is usually justified on the grounds that it would interfere with the religious studies that the young Haredim undertake. However, it also reflects the long-standing antagonism of the Orthodox towards a wider Israeli society that is not rooted in Jewish law.

This reluctance to wear a uniform along with an insistence that the taxpayer subsidise their numerous religious institutions is a source of considerable resentment.

This incident is one of an increasing number of ill-tempered clashes between the two most extreme wings of Israeli society. Neither section can command the support of more than 10 per cent of the population but they make rather more noise than the remaining 80 per cent.

The dispute is especially ironic because Meretz, which favours the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the remainder of the West Bank and southern Lebanon, would be absolutely horrified if the zealous Haredim were ever to enter the army en masse. The army itself would be almost as horrified. An influx of fanatical religious recruits is one that it could easily do without.



Binyamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sarah, at the graveside of Yoni, his brother, as Israel honoured its victims of war and terrorism. Yoni died in the 1976 Entebbe raid



th Harbour yesterday

Makers are told to recall ten 'unsafe' baby-walkers

By ROSS DUNN

THE U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has ordered makers to recall ten models of baby-walkers because they are unsafe. The recall covers models made between 1994 and 1997. The models are: Baby Jogger's "Easy Walker", "Easy Walker II", "Easy Walker III", "Easy Walker IV", "Easy Walker V", "Easy Walker VI", "Easy Walker VII", "Easy Walker VIII", "Easy Walker IX", and "Easy Walker X".

British Gentile pilot joined war to save fledgeling Jewish state

FROM ROSS DUNN IN TEL AVIV

IN THEIR hour of need the Jewish people were helped by a British Gentile atheist to defeat their enemies in Israel's 1948 war of independence.

The volunteers who came to save the newly born state of Israel from destruction included Gordon Levett, an ex-RAF squadron leader, who was smuggled from London by the Jewish underground.

Mr Levett returned to Israel this week for the 50th anniversary celebrations and to rejoice with others who had served in the "ragtag" army, which inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Arabs.

In the early days of the conflict the fledgeling Israeli defence force had no ranks, rules or regulations but was one of the most spirited the



Gordon Levett now, and as an RAF pilot in 1941

world has ever known. Mr Levett, now 78, was one of 3,500 men and women from 29 countries who rallied to support Israel.

About 6,000 soldiers in the Israeli forces died in the conflict, including 4 per cent of the volunteers. "I did the only thing that I could do, thinking that I would be followed by tens of thousands of Gentiles who felt the same way as I did," Mr Levett said. "To my astonishment, I was the only English Gentile pilot

in the Israeli Air Force, and that staggered me, frankly."

His dignified manners, gentle speech and upright walk tend to disguise the heart of a man of daring and ideals. But, when he recalls the events of 1948, he is ignited by the passion that sent him on an incredible journey.

"I knew what was going on in Palestine and that the only solution to the problem was partition into two separate nations — Jewish and, of course, Arab." But he was ashamed of the British Government's "pro-Arab" line to protect its oil interests, and opposition to partition. Israel's population of 650,000 was attacked by Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt which aimed to "push the Jews into the sea".

For about five months Mr Levett flew transport planes

from Prague in Czechoslovakia carrying arms, bombs and, most important, 25 Messerschmitt fighter planes. Only with the fighter planes were the Israeli forces able to hold their position and then attack the Arab armies. And one of the pilots was Mr Levett.

"We had to throw the bombs out by hand. We had no bomb racks and the chaps who threw the bombs out were officially called 'bomb chucksers'," he said, laughing. "They had to tie a rope around their waist so that when they threw the bomb out they didn't follow the blooming bomb themselves. We didn't do much damage, I

hope. I don't think we killed many people, but we certainly damaged Arab morale."

He added: "It was one of the greatest humanitarian causes in history. After the pogroms, the persecutions and the Holocaust, something had to be done to provide a haven against anti-Semitism for the Jews of the future."

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Liberty. The art of the idiosyncratic.

CRIES UNHEARD: MARY BELL

Why did no one see that Mary wanted help?

On May 25, 1968, Martin Brown, 4, was found dead in a derelict house in Scotswood, an area of run-down council houses three miles from the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne. The death was initially thought to be an accident. Nine weeks later, on July 31, Brian Howe, 3, was found dead on waste ground. He had been throttled. The police investigated and, in August, Mary Bell, 11 (10 when the first murder was committed) and Norma Bell (no relation), 13, were charged with the murder of the two boys. They were sent for trial at Newcastle Assizes in December 1968.

The second instalment of our serialisation of Gitta Sereny's remarkable study of Mary Bell examines the clues to her inner turmoil and how they were ignored, and reveals why death had no meaning for her

body was almost completely still; her nerves were in her hands — they moved constantly, as if a separate part of her. Apparently absent-mindedly, she stroked her dress, her hair, herself and constantly had a finger, though never her thumb, in her mouth. Every few minutes she took it out, wiped her lips with the back of her hand, and then rubbed first the back of the hand, then the finger on her skirt — only to put it, or another one, straight back in her mouth. (And 25 years later I would see a repetition of this manifestation of disturbance in one of

"You must tell the truth, sir."
"You must tell the truth. Very well, she may be sworn."
As I write this, I have no difficulty recalling the atmosphere in court that day. Unlike any of the other sessions, it had a sense of breathless expectation to it, a kind of hunger, with the undercurrent of morbid curiosity that in lurid murder trials makes voyeurs of the spectators. I remember a sharp feeling of unease. I hadn't felt this listening to Norma's whispers and watching her sob. It was the younger

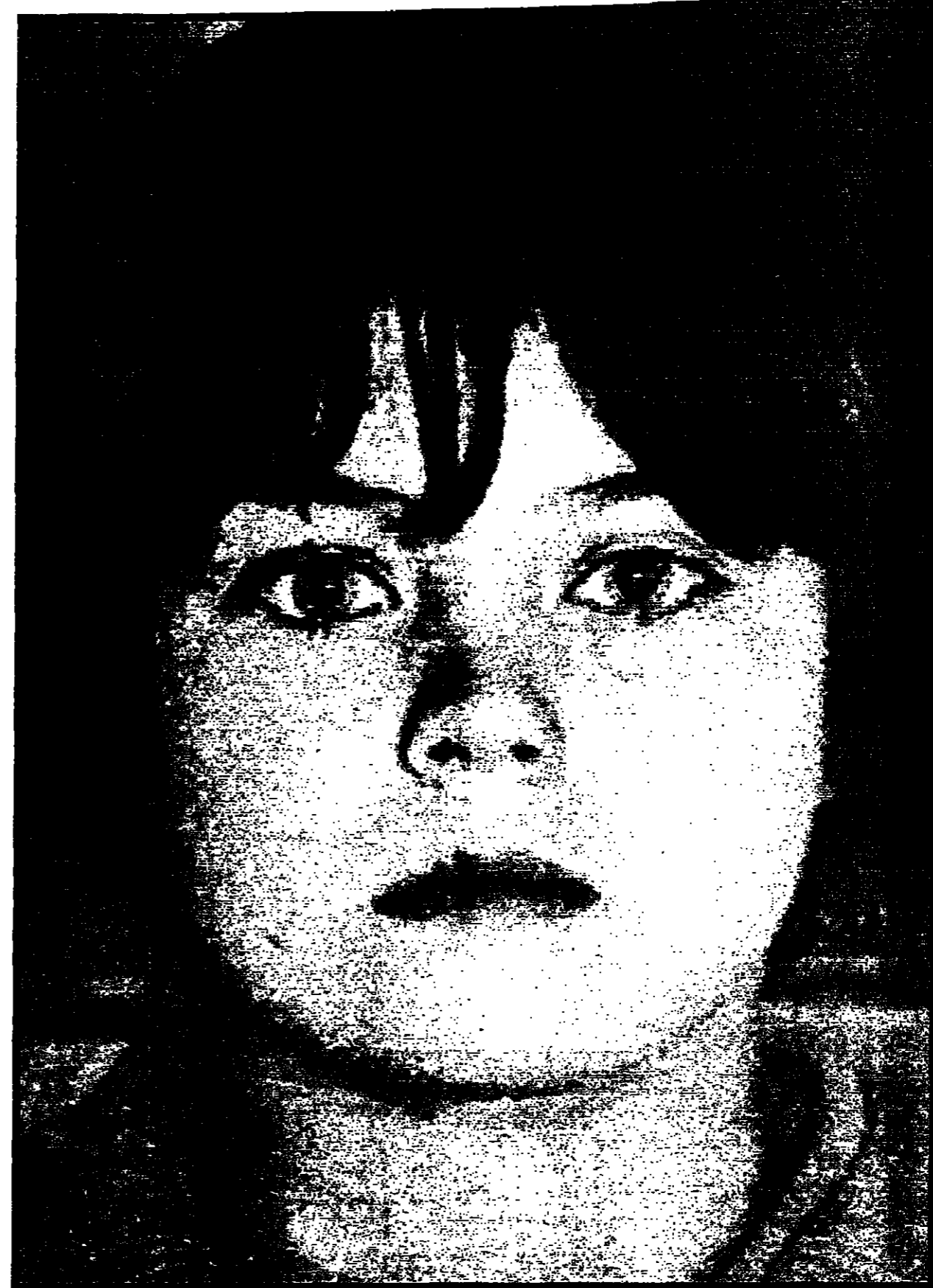
more about her background than they did — I didn't until much later — but because I had, in the aftermath of the Second World War, worked with children who had been traumatised by their experiences in the camps or working as forced labourers in Germany. Most were between four and 12. Some were almost catatonic, others were hyperactive, talking not only all day, but also through the night, in their sleep. Some wanted to be held, others trembled at the least touch.

But one thing almost all of them had in common on arrival, and for many weeks afterwards, was an absolute rejection of anything that smacked of moral concepts. The words good and bad had no meaning for them; their faces went stiff, their eyes blank at any attempt to explain the necessity, for their own safety, of a few rules. There was a minimum of imposed discipline, but at the slightest sign by any adult of disapproval, or impatience, many of them exploded, acting (for acting it was) wilder, "badder", more knowing in every way than they essentially were.

The resemblance between these damaged children and their rejection of conventional morality in 1945, and Mary in that English courtroom in 1968, all at sea with the moral concepts she was asked to swear an oath to, was striking. From day one — with her obvious lies and fantasies, her movements with her hands and fingers, her strange intelligence, her stillness and isolation — she appeared to me nothing so much as a horribly confused child to whom something dreadful had at some time been done.

On the previous evening after Norma's examination-in-chief, Mary had shown the policeman guarding her how frightened she was becoming. They won't be able to do anything to one of us without the other," she said that night to WPC Pauline J., whom she particularly liked. "After all, we were both... in it. It would be unfair to punish one without the other." A little later that sleepless night she said: "They are going to blame it all on me, they'll say Norma's daft."

And towards the end of her first morning of cross-examination, questioned once more by Norma's counsel about the notes [notes that she and Norma had written and deliberately left when they broke into the local nursery, confessing to the murders — a classic cry for help that was routinely ignored], Mary gave way to her anger about the court's obvious partiality and her fear about what would happen to her. She answered with a part I and, as I now know, a part truth that — the only time it would happen during the trial — gave some indication of the turmoil in the relationship between her and Norma and the increasing frenzy of their fantasies.



Mary Bell: Her face was emotionally blank, her body almost entirely still. Her nerves were in her hands; they moved constantly



The house where the body of Martin Brown, 4, was found

I was in the gallery, across from the two girls and noted how the difference between them showed up almost immediately. As the judge in his red coat entered in slow, leisurely steps, the barristers and officials bowed deeply, and the police officers spread throughout the court stood to attention. Mary could hardly contain her pleasure at the spectacle. Norma, however, her whole body expressing bewilderment, turned to her parents, her face reflecting the mixture of nervous smile and tears that would become so familiar to the spectators.

One felt worried about Norma almost all the time, sorry for her distress and concerned for her obviously caring parents and numerous relatives who attended every session, stroking the desperate child when she burst into tears. Her ten brothers and sisters, from her handicapped 16-year-old brother to the baby in arms, waited outside the court every day of the trial.

Mary, much smaller, with her heart-shaped face and bright-blue eyes, was not alone either, though the members of her extended family who attended looked unable to hide their anxiety and distress. The person most conspicuous, however, was Betty, her mother. She exclaimed volubly, sobbed wildly and time and again showed her indignation at what was being said about her child by stalking out of the court on her high heels, only to return, just as ostentatiously, soon afterwards.

As the two girls sat through the proceedings, Norma's attention span, we would see quickly, was short: she would listen carefully for a few minutes, then squirm, look around the court, and turn to speak to her mother who, invariably, turned her back to face the judge. Mary, instead, was astonishingly attentive. She appeared hardly to notice her mother's dramatics, nor did she seem puzzled or distressed. The impression she gave was one of intense interest. Her face, intellectually alive when she spoke either in whispers to her solicitor, or later when she testified, had a perpetually listening quality, though it was, except in anger, emotionally blank. Mary's

the ten-year-olds who murdered James Bulger. He, too, sat much of the time with a finger, usually his thumb, in his mouth or ear.

"Mary," the judge said at 10.30am on December 12, "I want to ask some questions." Pale, wearing the yellow dress that she had told WPC F. the night before her mother had made for her, she stood very straight facing him. "Have you been taught about God?"

"Yes, sir," Mary answered in her singsong Geordie accent. She would never forget to add this respectful "sir" during the hours of testimony that followed, unless to show anger, or contempt, for the questioner.

child's straight back, the blankness in her face and that awful self-control that could so readily be interpreted as an incapacity to feel that aroused in me a resistance to being part of it, almost an embarrassment at being there.

In recalling my distress at the proceedings, particularly the instinctive partiality of those present in favour of the unhappy, childlike Norma, and their almost passionate rejection of the apparently unfeeling, self-possessed Mary, I'm anxious not to mislead anyone now. Like everyone at the time I was sure that Mary had killed, and that whatever part the older child might have played, Mary had to have been the dominating figure. Where I differed was that although I was deeply aware that what had happened to the little boys and their families was monstrous, I did not see this 11-year-old child as a monster, and was appalled that others did. This was not because I knew

"What does a 'joint idea' mean?" Mr Smith asked her.

"It was both of us."
"Both of you what?"
"That wrote the notes."
"Yes, but who decided the notes should be written?"
"Her."
"She did?"
"Yes."
"What did she say?"
"She says 'We will do it for a giggle.' I says it to Mr Robson and all, it was both of us."
"Did you ask why she thought this would be a giggle?"
"She wanted to get put away," Mary said, sounding very angry now.

"Is this true, what you are telling the court?"
"Yes, because after that she asked me to run away with her."
"Where to?"
"She just says 'Run away with us.'"
"What for?"
"I don't know. I have run away with her before."
The judge now intervened. "But did she say why she wanted to get put away?" he asked.

The judge shut his notebook and stood up. "We will adjourn until 2.15," he said. "I'll kick her mouth in," Mary shouted, but everyone had begun to talk, as if to shut out her voice. For the first time she had tried to bring up the dreadful fantasies that bound her and Norma together but it was incomprehensible to this assembly of good and decent people who were neither qualified nor required to deal with the pathology of disturbed children.

"I think it's all a dream," she told WPC Susan L. that night. "It's never happened. Do you think I'll ever go home again? I wish I was going to sleep in my own bed. Do you think I'll get 30 years? If I was a judge and I had an 11-year-old who'd done this..."

from home" and "killing the little ones". It was all true: the running away from home was a fact; the rest was part of a terrible fantasy that had become real.

But no one looked, no one asked, and so no one was in a position to associate one event with another. If the girls' behaviour had been recognised early on, perhaps someone would have realised that serious trouble was brewing. But even if, in the months leading up to the trial, when some of the social workers realised the deficiency in their knowledge — as we know they did — efforts had been made to gain some understanding of the dynamics of these families' lives and to discover what Mary's childhood had been, the resulting picture would have proved how wrong adult assumptions can be, and perhaps could have led to different decisions being made.

On December 17, 1968, Mary Bell guilty on two counts of manslaughter because of diminished responsibility and sentenced to detention for life. Norma Bell was found not guilty on both counts.

she speaks of her with sympathy. The resentment she bears, while associated with Norma, is not against her but against the system that she now thinks consciously used Norma, as she — though not consciously — used Norma, too.

"Norma's family moved in next door to us in Whitehouse Road a week after we arrived in the spring of 1967," she said. "When I heard they were called Bell, too, I asked my dad whether they were related to us. He said 'Not a chance'."

"I was fascinated by their having 11 children. I was terribly curious how they lived. Their house was just like ours: a kitchen, a scullery, a bathroom and a living room downstairs and three bedrooms and a lavatory upstairs. How did they put 13 people in there? Later I found out that they ate in shifts."

'My mother told me I looked like a tart. Well it takes

There can be little doubt that the transfer to Styal when she was 16 was destructive for Mary. The success of her moral re-education at Red Bank was almost entirely due to the love she had felt for and received from Mr Dixon. The slow growing-up process, which with the help of interested teachers she had just begun, was brutally interrupted. The carefully constructed security and her developing intellectual ambition in an all-female penal community where Mary, now the youngest prisoner in a world of isolated women, would regress entirely. Not only would she be used emotionally as well as sexually as a fresh young girl, but also, and perhaps this was worst of all, she would be treated by them as a child, not responsible for her crimes.

Two days after she arrived at Styal, her mother had come to visit her. Were you glad she'd come? I asked. "It was embarrassing, you know, really, really embarrassing. 'My baby!' she screamed. 'My baby,' and sobbing, she pulled at me, trying... God... to get

me to sit on her knees. She wasn't really crying you know, she just sobbed for Mrs Sissons who supervised the visit, just as she had regularly sobbed for the staff at Red Bank. She only stayed for half an hour. That's all she stayed, you know, and I said nothing and she saw nothing and nobody. She no doubt felt she was an authority on Styal after that. But at least, as far as I knew, that first time she didn't give interviews or go on TV about it. The next time she came she did and that was awful for me, just awful."

Didn't your mother ask you how you were? How you felt? "No, she didn't. She never did. She just complained about her own life and, worrying me to death, about her health, always her health, but on that day I was just as glad she didn't ask anything because I was very unhappy, just incredibly sad, and I just didn't want to talk to her. "Even that first day after I arrived, I began to have this feeling of... I don't know how to put it... hopelessness? No, it's not that or just that. It wasn't that or just that. You see, there were people I knew



Styal Prison: Mary's move here when she was 16 was a destructive one for her

there... of course Betty Blue, who was going around the place saying she'd known me since she was a kid and anyone says anything about me, she'd punch their brains out, you know. And she was telling the screws about my dad and everything. But then, too, there were sisters and some of the boys, you know, at Red Bank... it all seemed so... so... par... Par? "Yes, yes, as if nothing could have prevented my being

there, or their being there. And if nothing could have prevented it, what was the use of anything? And I knew nothing about my brother or the girls, nobody told me nothing. Mary's first real trouble came only a few weeks after her arrival at Styal when two girls asked Mary to help them in an escape attempt. They had stolen a jemmy from a workshop and needed someone strong to wrench the bars open and then straighten them

out once they'd gone. "I believed them, stupid me," Mary said. "I thought this was great, just like a film. I didn't realise they were just mouth, mouth, mouth, and that nobody could escape, not that way anyway." That first punishment award was traumatic... "Yes," she gulped, "that's what they called it, an 'award'. An officer came for me at eight o'clock and we walked to the bottom end of the prison. Eight o'clock is the time of the

morning they used to hang people and they kept the report up to the same time. There is something sinister about that to me. "My first sight of Bleak was really dismal," she said. "It was a low, grim building, straight out of a Dickens novel, sort of crouching and decaying, surrounded by a metal fence, with bars and wire mesh on the Perspex windows. There was a stench of urine and disinfectant. There was nothing in the cell but a bedspring with a bottle-green rimmed metal frame, a stained plastic chamber pot and an equally filthy plastic mug. You weren't allowed to have anything of your own. They gave you a toothbrush and soap for ablutions and stuff to roll one cigarette after each meal."

"I couldn't believe it could be as bad as it was," she said, "but it really was. I've often wondered whether they've made any changes to it since then. I almost can't believe they wouldn't have. I mean, how can it be allowed? "There was supposed to be a Gideon Bible in each cell but there wasn't even that. The

screw said they were taken away because people made obscene drawings on them. The walls were full of graffiti, names, sentences, threats to the governor, the staff, but also lines from songs. By the time I left that cell 14 days later I knew all the names, all the sentences, all the songs and lines from poems too by heart..."

Couldn't you have requested the Bible? I asked. "Much later, when I'd been in Bleak several times, I did," she said. "I said I'd read the rule-book and that I was allowed to have religious scriptures, but they just told me to shut my mouth." Soon after Mary's first spell in Bleak House she was moved to Davies House, one of three housing long-term inmates. "Janey Jones — you know, the famous madam? — she was in there. She was really nice. "One Sunday when my mother was coming to visit, Janey, out of the goodness of her heart, offered to put a bit of make-up on me. It was fun you know... that was before I went butch. And when I went to the visitor's room my moth-

er said: 'You look like a tart. You put too much on.' Well, it takes one to know one, doesn't it?" Mary's voice was quite vicious when she said this. "It was so wet, wasn't it? Here she was, Catholic to the eyeballs, the saints here and the saints there, and sin sin and... well... you know what she was... True, not any more then: she was becoming respectable, with a respectable man and a brand-new house with brand-new furniture she'd endlessly describe to me, a lifer you know, at Styal. She'd tell me about 'my room in the house... my room? Oh, God, she'd understood nothing, never anything, never that prison was not a... an interlude: it was my life; the place where I would be for ever."

On one occasion later on, she wasn't quite sure when Mary made a half-hearted suicide attempt. "It was when I was very, very depressed," she said. "I can't quite remember whether it was after Mr Dixon died in the summer of 1975 [one date she would always remember], or later, when

Continued on page 21

مكتبة من الأصل



Dr Thomas Stuttford on the amazing folic acid; happy travelling; wine for bad backs; young arthritics

Is this the medical wonder of the age?

The news that folic acid may have a role in preventing Alzheimer's disease seems to suggest it may become the wonder medication of the millennium. What is particularly pleasing to those who do not like to take "drugs" is that the vitamin is present in food, including liver, yeast and fresh green leafy vegetables and fruit.

In the 1970s, Dr Reynolds, working at varying times with teams at Northwick Park, Yale University and with the British MRC neuropsychiatric unit showed there was widespread folic acid deficiency in psycho-geriatric patients and that many of these were depressed. The folic acid deficiency was found not only in the blood serum but also in the red cells and in the spinal fluid.

Taking additional folic acid before and in the first part of pregnancy has been shown to reduce dramatically the incidence of congenital neurological deformities such as spina bifida and hydrocephalus in babies.

Low levels of folic acid and an association between high levels of homocysteine (amino acid, whose levels are controlled by folic acid and vitamin B12) and heart disease has also been demonstrated.

The recent work from Oxford University under the direction of Professor David Smith, chairman of the department of pharmacology, and Professor P.M. Ueland of Bergen University, has confirmed a relationship between folic acid deficiency and dementia.

Just as in heart disease and stroke, so in Alzheimer's disease: levels of homocysteine increase, and a level of folic acid and B12 will prevent or delay the onset of Alzheimer's. Trials to test this will be long and costly.

A link between folic acid and dementia has been established for about 30 years. Dr Ted Reynolds, of the Institute of Epileptology at south London's Maudsley Hospital, described in 1967 how patients who are deficient in folic acid improved in their mood, alertness and sociability when given supplements of

the vitamin. Folic acid deficiency was formerly a feature in some patients taking old-fashioned anti-epileptic drugs. These patients then became very depressed and lost intellectual sharpness, even to the point of dementia. Treating them with folic acid significantly improved their condition.

Not all dementia is Alzheimer's. Twenty-five per cent of people diagnosed as having Alzheimer's in fact have Lewy Body Dementia. People with this behave and progress clinically in a very different way from those with Alzheimer's. Their dementia fluctuates with intensity, they suffer from hallucinations, they frequently have mild Parkinson's-type symptoms, they lose consciousness from time to time, and often are aggressive and difficult moods. Above all, these patients may be made very much worse rather than better if they are given old style psychotropics, such as heavy doses of Largactil.

Folic acid and B12 deficiency occurs only in those who are obviously anaemic. Special tests, and examination of a blood film to measure the levels of the vitamins, are needed.



Children aged around ten are most susceptible to car sickness. It helps to keep them cool and happy — and for drivers to take it easy

Keeping nausea out of the Bank Holiday spin

TWO HUNDRED miles of traffic jams are to be expected again over the May bank holidays, and in many of them there will be children looking pale and drowsy, dribbling on the back seat. They will be complaining of dizziness, headache and, most alarming of all for their parents, nausea and vomiting. Should they stop the car, risking road rage, or carry on and hope for the best?

The whole family is potentially susceptible to motion sickness. One in three people suffers readily from motion sickness, which is at its worse around the age of ten. The first measure to take is to make certain that the atmosphere is relaxed: family quarrels will make motion sickness more likely. There should be no anxiety, so the weekend driver should not try to imitate David Coulthard. Adults should keep their windows open, as a stuffy atmosphere increases any feeling of nausea.

The journey may be more pleasant if the egg sandwiches and chocolates remain hidden en route, as the sight and smell of food also increases motion sickness.

Fortunately, very small children are less likely to show signs of motion sickness than those who are older. This is just as well, as one treatment, Stugeron, which is frequently prescribed, may only be given to children of five and over. Breastfeeding mothers should also avoid it. Stugeron works in two ways as it dulls the vomiting centre in the brain, thereby preventing nausea, and reduces the sensitivity of the inner ear to the motion that causes sickness. Stugeron's effects last for eight hours.

Wine as the treatment

The outer casing of the disc surrounds a firm gelatinous centre. If the outer casing, the annulus fibrosus, splits, the soft inner matter herniates (protrudes) through it and presses either on the ligament, which is painful, or on to a nerve, which is agony.

Dr C. Rasmussen of the Department of Rheumatology at the Hjørring Hospital in Denmark has published research in the *European Spine Journal* of the effect of wine drinking on recovery from first-time back surgery undertaken to relieve the symptoms of a herniated lumbar disc, the traditional slipped disc.

The concept that a tranquilliser given simultaneously with other treatment for low back pain in general, and a herniated disc in particular, is not new. The discs in the spine are the washers between the vertebra, the bones of the spine.

Dr Rasmussen's work is that the effect of the wine is not only related to its undoubted powers to relax the drinker,

as Dr Wilson's tranquilisers would have done. Other drinks, equally relaxing, did not have the same affect. And, though a combination of wine and beer drinking seemed to be helpful, teetotalers or those patients who preferred beer or spirits alone did not do so well.

Surgery on herniated discs — slipped discs — is not only becoming more common but is much more efficient. The days when a patient with a herniated disc was advised to lie on a hard board for weeks have passed. An MRI scan can identify the exact spot where the disc is pressing on the nerve so that the surgeon is able to carry out a micro-discectomy. Post-operatively,

the patient is no longer wrapped in a plaster cast but, if all goes well, is kept in hospital for only a day or two and will be playing football with his or her children within three weeks.

The most common indication for surgery is pain, although the cause of this is obvious. The factors that determine its severity and persistence are complex and defy detailed predictive analysis; the patients' psychological background, lifestyle and the structure of their back are all important.

Arthritic Archers

DANIEL ARCHER has Still's disease, a variant of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. This is a relief to listeners who were worried he had a form of acute leukemia and were only buoyed up only by the thought that we couldn't have serious disaster striking two young Archers so soon after each other. Even so, Still's disease, which starts with a high fever, enlarged spleen, painful big lymphatic glands and a marked increase in the white blood cell count, is a very unpleasant condition. Although in Still's disease the generalised symptoms often precede the joint troubles, the long-term disability will stem from these.

In about one in five young people, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis starts as it did in Daniel's case, but in others there is a great similarity to that seen in adult rheumatoid arthritis or in other cases. The onset resembles symptoms more closely associated with Ankylosing Spondylitis.

Writers of *The Archers* now have an everlasting storyline. The outlook in juvenile rheumatoid arthritis is highly variable. Because it is a disease that waxes and wanes, the writers can create crisis after crisis should audience figures fall.

Equally, if the listeners grow tired of Daniel's illness and Shula's love life, he can recover completely and disappear to some far corner of Britain, because juvenile rheumatoid arthritis has a better outlook than the adult variety — 75 per cent have complete remission. The object of treatment is to ease the pain and inflammation in the joints and prevent deformity.

ARTS
Do museums give value for money? Sir Nicholas Goodison poses the question
Pages 41-43

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How we kept our love alive

Talking exclusively to *The Times*, actor Christopher Reeve, reveals how he is still able to be a husband to his wife and a father to his children. Interview by Penny Wark



Christopher Reeve and his wife, Dana. He is determined that his paralysis will not interfere with her career: "Part of my job is to set her free without her having to feel guilty"

The main artery of the Reeve house is a broad hallway that opens, without wheelchair-limiting doors, into comfortable living rooms. A golden Labrador pads around carrying a rubber bone; a bronze statue of Superman stands on a piano. The hall ends with sliding doors leading to a small room.

Christopher Reeve faces the windows, so at first you glimpse just his head propped above the vast wheelchair with its awesome medical equipment. His immobility is daunting, and no less so when you finally see that the pink face above the frozen body is that of an attractive 45-year-old who can talk, smile, laugh and kiss.

Even so it is a cruel metamorphosis for the man whose professional reputation rests on his portrayal of Superman, the quintessentially handsome, square-jawed hero who won every fight because he was invincible.

Since the riding accident that paralysed him three years ago, Reeve has breathed through a ventilator. Today its plastic tube crosses a blue-and-green-banded sweater and enters his throat beneath the bowtie of bandages covering his tracheotomy wound. His breathing sounds like a dog snoring, and his chest rises and falls above pale, clean hands, the only exposed parts of his paralysed body.

'We both knew that we would take the future day by day'

knows that a cure for paralysis is possible. Consequently he chivvies them with e-mails, urging them to hurry up. Declaring his intention to walk by his fiftieth birthday was a deliberate challenge, provocative and pragmatic, and very much a part of his recovery. Determination and strength of spirit have their limitations, he knows, so he backs them up with faith in medical research.

"If I didn't believe that there was the possibility of improvement, I would have a much more difficult time. In my case the gap that would have to be crossed by regenerated nerves is only 20mm, tantalisingly close."

Dana, his wife of six years and the mother of Will, their five-year-old son, enters the room. Reeve's nurse will bring him iced tea, but Dana must say goodbye because she is about to perform at a local benefit concert — she is a singer and actress. They kiss, tenderly. You might call it a smacker; it is certainly not perfunctory. A large framed picture of Dana is close to Reeve's chair and he is not alone in acknowledging that she is a remarkable woman.

"I see it as one of my jobs to set her free, to be able to pursue her career without having to feel guilty for leaving me behind. Sometimes it's hard to give when you're feeling needy, when you're feeling 'I really wish she doesn't do that part because it means she'll be gone for three weeks'. But I always stick by the plan, otherwise she'd feel trapped. It just wouldn't be fair on her, so you have to... There is an interminable pause as Reeve looks out through the window towards the trees and small lakes that lie beyond his ranch-style home."

side to side. "We're talking about the theatre." "That's not an issue between them? "Never, no, not at all." He sips on the plastic tube that hovers below his mouth and his chair tilts back, shifting his weight to ward off pressure sores. "This event in our lives has made it necessary for us all to find strength. Dana certainly has reserves of strength that have completely amazed me."

riding together, go to the movies on a whim. Everything has to be planned, you need a nurse by your side and often an aide for lifting." He and Dana never let anything fester between them, he adds, and if the practicalities of their relationship have changed, the instincts which made it work remain. By nature a neat and organised person who would silently tidy up, Reeve now observes as Dana "makes an extra effort not to let the place

function by nurses. Understanding that his body is slowly breaking down, he fights the decay with exercise that has maintained the impressive proportions of his sportsman's thighs. "To have asked them to let me go would have been an act of cowardice, and it would have been devastating to Dana and to my children."

but Dana had to do it for me. So it's my loss but I mustn't put it on her. So far he doesn't feel bad for me, or embarrassed by me — we joke about the chair."

space. I refuse to go that way." At the end of the acknowledgments section in his autobiography, Reeve wrote: "This is my story as I remember it but then again, I fell on my head."

with Christopher Reeve, and cannot recall having been so affected by meeting someone. What sticks in my mind is not the wheelchair or the easy observations that he is brave, heroic, inspirational — though he is all of these things. I suspect he would be more flattered to be regarded as funny, good company, fanciable. He is all of these things, too.

'It doesn't all depend on what happens in the bedroom'

had to have been very hard for Dana to hear me say, maybe they should let me go, but she didn't back down. "If Dana had hesitated, if I'd felt that she was just trying to say the right thing, then I might have chosen a different course. But her response was absolutely certain. She looked straight at me and didn't flinch. We didn't lose each other for a second. Neither of us knew what the future would be, but there was an implicit understanding that we would take it day by day and figure it out, which is exactly what we've done."

His approach to fathering is equally positive. He races his wheelchair against Will's bicycle (Will is not ashamed to win), talks to him about the solar system, and cheers from the sidelines as his son plays sport. If necessary, he quietly ticks him off.

"Nine times out of ten that fixes it. This past winter I would have taught him to ski.

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Put on thy strength, O Zion

Arafat cannot give Israel peace of mind, says Conor Cruise O'Brien

"Unease in Zion" was the title of a book published not long after the foundation of the new State of Israel. Fifty years later, the Unease is still there, though less intense than it has been at several periods in Israel's history.

On April 23, 1948, Chaim Weizmann — soon to be the first President of Israel — received the decisive personal message from President Truman: "... if a Jewish state was declared, the President would support it." Weizmann told Ben-Gurion's advisers: "Proclaim the State, no matter what ensues." On May 14, in Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion, as Prime Minister, proclaimed the State of Israel. On the following day, as the British Mandate expired, the armies of five Arab states attacked the new State. Although the Arabs had a huge military superiority in equipment and firepower — and some encouragement from the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin — Israel's armed forces managed to hold on to most of the territory Israel claimed.

In the first ten years of the new State, the Unease not merely continued, but seemed to deepen with the impact of the Cold War and America's wooing of the Arab States into what became the Baghdad Pact. During this period, Israel appeared to the State Department as best a nuisance and at worst a liability to American interests. Under the Baghdad Pact, the United States armed Iraq, one of Israel's bitterest enemies. Israel backed Britain and France in an attack on Egypt — the grotesque adventure known as "Suez". After Britain and France hurriedly withdrew, under both American and Russian pressure, Ben-Gurion tried briefly to hang on to Israel's gains. This led to the most dangerous period in Israel's history to date. When the Russians threatened to attack Britain, France and Israel, America made it known that an attack on Britain and France would lead to US retaliation. The conspicuous omission of "Israel" was deliberate and forced Israel to begin withdrawal from Sinai.

Israel did not, however, remain long in isolation. On July 14, 1958, the pro-American Iraqi Government was overthrown and the Baghdad Pact disappeared. Israel allowed British and American planes to overfly Israeli territory to come to the help of Jordan, supposedly threatened by Iraq. Ever since, Israel has always been regarded by the Pentagon as the most reliable, as well as the strongest, American ally in the region.

Then in June 1966 came Israel's stunning victory over Egypt, Syria and Jordan in the Six Day War. To many Israelis, it seemed for a while as if Unease in Zion was a thing of the past. But it returned with a vengeance after Egypt's surprise attack on Yom Kippur (October 6, 1973), which was finally held off, peace with Egypt eventually followed.

That peace has justifiably been rated "a cold peace"; but it has held, even after Sadat's murder. Its holding means that Israel's Arab neighbours no longer appear to pose a

serious military threat. This is important but it does not banish Unease. And for many Israelis the main focus of Unease is what is known as "the Peace Process". For about 20 years now, the idea that Israel can obtain peace with the Arab world through the surrender of territory has been very popular with academics, media people and politicians in the West, and also with quite large numbers of Israelis. Yet "the territory for peace" idea has some glaring flaws.

By surrendering territory Israel can certainly get peace, for a time at least, with those Arabs who sign up for the deal. But there will always be many Arabs who will denounce any deal. And there will be some who will actively carry on the struggle by suicide bomb attacks and other means. So Israel can surrender territory without getting real peace. And this is what has actually happened.

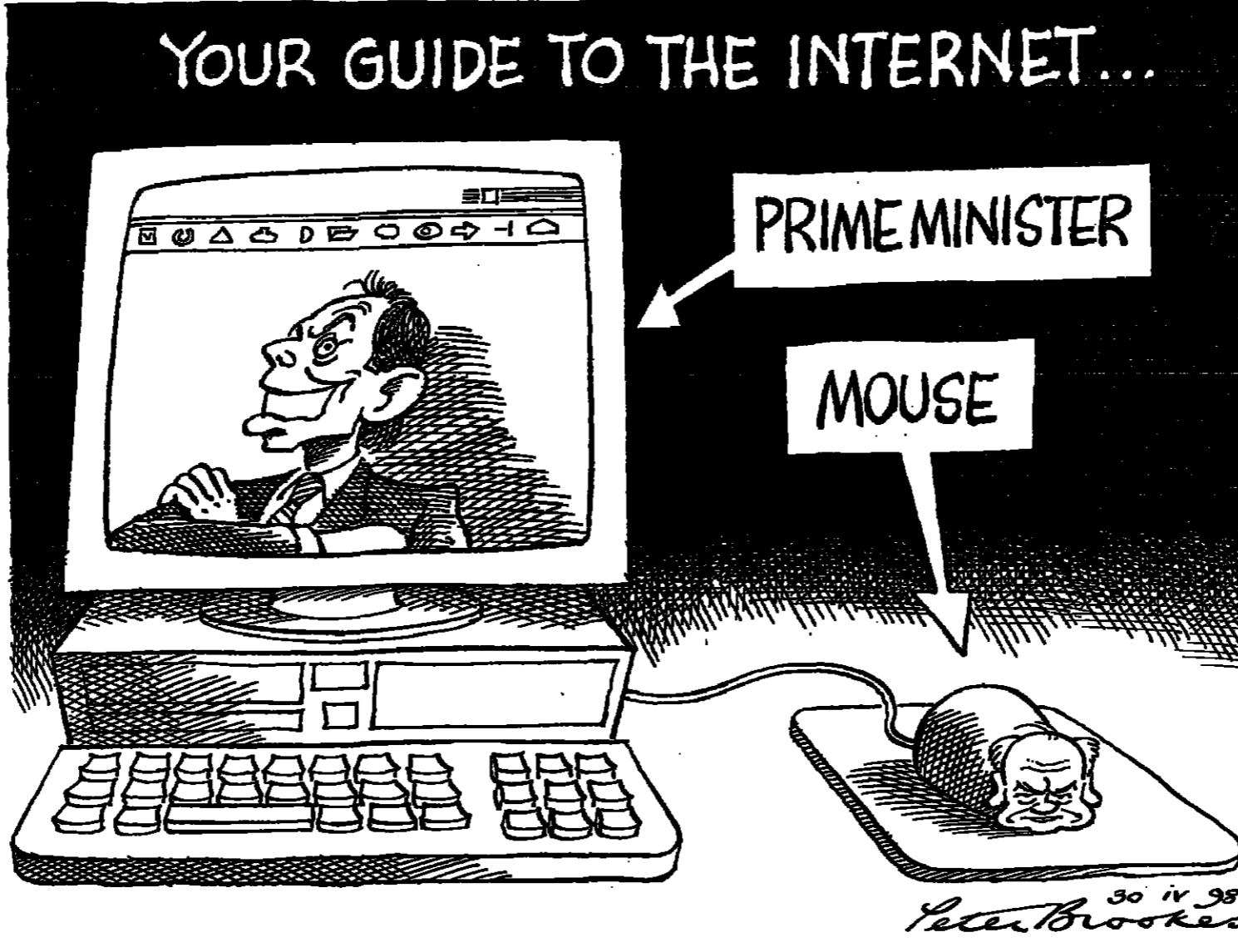
After Arafat had, in foolish euphoria, backed President Saddam Hussein's attack on Kuwait, he was financially ruined, having alienated the Arab regimes who had so long financed his Fatah. So he felt he had no alternative but to agree to any terms for peace with Israel which the Americans would dictate. And the Israelis could see strong reasons for not opposing a seemingly reasonable deal brokered by the Americans, their indispensable backers.

The deal was loudly hailed, at first and to some extent still, as representing "peace between Israel and the Arabs". But of course it just represents peace with Arafat and his followers, who now appear to be a corrupt and discredited minority in their territory. Hamas and other Arab organisations, backed by Syria, still consider themselves at war with Israel, and appear to have more Arab support than Arafat does.

I believe that Binyamin Netanyahu, whom I know and respect, is right to resist any more major transfers of territory to Arafat, unless he can demonstrate that he will not allow any further attacks on Israel from the territory he controls. He cannot demonstrate that, because Hamas, backed by Syria, is stronger than Arafat's discredited rump.

Netanyahu has been under some heavy pressure, but I think his position is now entering a more propitious period. There is a well-established cycle in Israeli-American relations. The period of maximum American pressure on Israel is — roughly — the first two years after a presidential election. But in the second two years — and especially the last year — the pressure eases. The nearer the next presidential election looms, the closer also looms the huge pro-Israel vote in New York. Illinois and California. This is the asset that has kept Israel going in much more difficult times.

Unease is unlikely to go away in our time. But Israel is not better able to cope with Unease both politically and economically than has ever been the case before in its 50 years of history.



Lights go out in euroland

Saxony's descent into extremist politics should warn Anglo-Saxons against EMU

The euro is being sold to the British people, rather successfully at present, by a bogus argument that used to belong to the Marxists, that of historical inevitability. Communists used to say that the Soviet system was much more advanced than capitalism and would inevitably replace it. Khrushchev told the Americans: "We will bury you." Capitalism has never been perfect; it had then, as it has now, serious flaws, but it has survived, and the Soviet Union has disappeared. The Nazis used the same propaganda. They believed in the triumph of the will of dictatorship over the weak confusions of democracy. The "thousand-year Reich" lasted 12 years. So much for inevitability.

As it happens, a very powerful instance of the dangers of the single currency has occurred this month, only a few days before the final arrangements for the currency are made. The main argument of the EMU-sceptics has always been that a single currency for different economic circumstances may make it impossible for particular nations or regions to adjust to change. Even in the United States, adjustment to regional differences has often been a long and difficult matter. Several states in the Deep South have never really recovered from the reconstruction that followed the Civil War; one could say that they have suffered more than a century of depression. Yet the United States has a tradition of mobility of labour and capital, and a single language. Europe has neither.

to bring East Germany up to the economic level of the West. Yet the disparities of higher unemployment and lower productivity have continued to this day. The German single currency experiment, initiated by Herr Kohl, has had unexpectedly high social and economic costs. Again, one should make the comparison with the Soviet single currency. That will apply over a much larger area, to 11 different nations and not just two halves of one nation. There will be many different languages, and much less willingness, or ability to move jobs. There will also be less willingness to make large transfers of funds to support the weaker economy. Job mobility, a single language and support from the wealthier regions have not prevented long-term regional depressions in the United States or in Germany since reunification took place. Yet these vital advantages will not even exist in the single-currency Europe to mitigate future regional depressions. Herr Kohl is repeating the single currency misadventure he was responsible for in Germany on a European scale.

This week's election result in the eastern German Land of Saxony-Anhalt shows what can happen. Reunification occurred in 1990. Eight years later unemployment in Saxony-Anhalt is 22.6 per cent; the economy is hardly growing at all. The supposed growth of 0.6 per cent will not be sufficient to prevent unemployment continuing to rise. Western Germany is quite prosperous, with exports responding favourably to the cheaper mark. Saxony-Anhalt, and more generally the old East Germany, is in long-term depression; there is no adequate adjustment mechanism in the absence of currency flexibility.

People in Saxony-Anhalt voted as one might have expected. The parties represented in the German Government of Herr Kohl were repudiated. The Christian Democrats vote fell by more than 12 percentage points; the Free Democrats failed to reach the 5

per cent threshold and therefore have no seats. The main opposition party in Bonn, the Social Democrats, slightly, but only slightly, improved their share of the poll. A third of all votes went to the former Communists (PDS) or the party of the extreme Right, the Deutsche Volkspartei (DVU), which is led by Gerhard Frey, the Munich publisher. The DVU won its strongest support among young voters. People vote for extremist parties when they find themselves in an intolerable situation. When an overvalued currency causes mass unemployment and long-term depression, that is intolerable. Yet the people of Saxony-Anhalt cannot vote themselves out of their single currency; the people of the European Union countries which join the euro will not be able to vote themselves out of that single currency, if similar economic factors obtain.

The pro-Europe propagandists attack those of us who are sceptical about it as backward-looking, out of date, and anti-European. They say that the euro is inevitable, which may be true, and that it is equally inevitable that Britain will join, which is not true. Yet they never answer the Saxony-Anhalt question. If Germany, the most powerful economy in Europe, with the advantage of a single people, a single language, and a single federal budget, cannot solve the adjustment problem in its own eastern regions, how is the Union, with none of these advantages, going to solve similar problems which will inevitably arise in the very different European economies?

If Britain does join the single currency after the next election, as Gordon Brown thinks we will, everything will depend on the rate at which we join. The pound is at present too high; that is having a depressing effect on the economy generally and on manufactured exports in particular. Since the pound rose to around the 3M level, there has been a sharp decline in Britain's balance of trade; the deficit is the largest since 1990,

and confidence among exporters is the lowest since 1980. Even this brief rise in the pound has had a dramatic and damaging impact on the British economy. If Britain were to join the euro at this rate, and were stuck there, we would have to face a long-term depression.

It is not certain that it would be the British economy which would suffer the worst damage. Weak regions inside strong economies, like Saxony-Anhalt or southern Italy, may suffer particularly badly. Wales might suffer if we joined and the manufacturing North East. Quite small differences in cost, productivity and currency values at the point of joining could have a disproportionate impact. Nothing could be done about it. Exchange rates inside Europe will no longer exist; interest rates will be set to suit the needs of the dominant sectors of the European economy. France is determined to see that its influence is as great as Germany's...

What did Herr Kohl say to this? His comments on the Saxony-Anhalt result were unusually feeble and defensive. He says that the DVU and the PDS are extremist parties. That is true. He says that the people who voted for them are not really Nazis or Communists, but are making a protest. That is probably also true, at least for most of them. Yet this was the protest of a third of the voters, in a high poll, against the natural consequences of Herr Kohl's policies. He has no answer to the Saxony-Anhalt problem either at a German level, or at the much more dangerous European level. Nor, incidentally, do the Social Democrats. Herr Kohl is the architect of the long-term depression in eastern Germany and does not know how to bring it to an end. Gordon Brown would cheerfully expose the regions of Britain, including his beloved Scotland, to the threat of the same disaster.

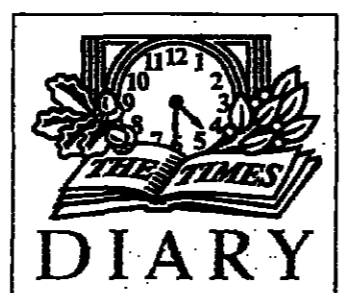
The single German mark has already proved a recruiting sergeant for unemployment and for extremist parties. The European Union already has strong extremist parties in France, Italy, Austria and eastern Germany, and already has one in eight people unemployed. The single European currency could do for Europe what the single German currency has done for eastern Germany. It is not inevitable that the British electorate should choose to take this risk.

Archer's army

IN THE run-up to the election for Mayor of London, Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare is ensuring he will be first among equals. The multi-millionaire novelist has assembled 100 researchers to help his campaign. In effect, he is assembling his own party structure: the team dwarfs the resources employed by his competitors and is more than twice as large as the number of analysts taken on by Tony Blair in Downing Street. Archer has recruited the researchers from nearly 400 Londoners who wrote to him to volunteer their services.

The researchers, who include bankers, lawyers and teachers, are working for the Conservative peer in their spare time, providing him with information to be fed into soundbites, television debates and speeches to minority groups. "They are overwhelmingly non-white, although not as female as we would like," said an Archer aide. Apeing the Tory party, my good lord has also appointed a treasurer, a special adviser and ten "team leaders" to manage the researchers.

Archer's likely competitors cannot compete: Glenda Jackson and Steven Norris share an analyst between them and Ken Livingstone relies solely on his parliamentary researcher. "Archer's researchers are like blue bottles around a honeypot," said Livingstone. "By polling day, he will have half of London working for him and be guaranteed to win."



The velocipede was a write-off but, fortunately, Sir George escaped with only a damaged suit: "Twice in the past six months they've raised the barrier as I was riding over it. Bicycling in London is dangerous enough without being unhorsed at the Lords."

Buying power

SIR John Soane would not be amused. Since time immemorial, the small yet grand museum in London named after the 18th-century architect has taken a rather snuffy view of commerce. Its only concession to Mammon has been a rickety table laid out with a few ancient postcards. But now, the RIBA Journal reports, the Sir John Soane's Museum has decided to embrace the modern world and open a shop in its basement. Some regulars will be alarmed; however, Margaret Richardson, its director, insists that the venture will not sell anything tacky like T-shirts or mugs. Instead it will concentrate on pukka souvenirs, such as marble-papered notebooks, architectural books and copies of Soane's drawings. "We started off saying we'd never have a shop," she said. "But we realised that people do love buying things."

Turning to Mammon: Soane

● **BEN BRADSHAW** has been taking off his clothes in the Commons. Despite a recent rebuke from Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker, for strolling around the chamber without his shoes on, the MP for Exeter has been stripping off after getting drenched in downpours and hanging his garments, including underpants, on radiators. Bradshaw is unabashed: "They are a pair of Calvin Kleins."

Ardent arias

THE racy television mini-series that saw Richard Chamberlain and Rachel Ward romping around

in the sea is to appear on stage as a Broadway musical. *The Thorn Birds*, originally a bonkbuster about a priest's illicit affair with a young Australian girl, is being put to music by Colleen McCullough, its author, with the help of Gloria Bruni, an opera composer. "It will be a mixture of rock and high church music," says McCullough. I eagerly await the premiere.



Vicar's temptress: Ward

Common touch

ANTHONY O'HEAR is making a bid for the title of People's Philosopher. The academic, who was called a snob by the Prime Minister this month after describing as sentimental the nation's response to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, says he has received overwhelming support from the public. O'Heare reports in *The Spectator* that after his controversial essay was published, he received 350 letters which were 10-1 in favour of his views. "Perhaps I am in touch after all," he says. "All rather disappointingly for one who had consistently assumed that the modern world was not for him."

EDWARD WELSH

Hucksters at the hustings

Michael Crick says the parties collude in by-election scams

Tomorrow's anniversary of the general election may be a relief to some MPs, since no MP can then be prosecuted for spending too much on his constituency campaign. But it is too late for the Labour member for Newark: last week the Crown Prosecution Service announced that Fiona Jones and her agent were being charged over their election expenses, and they now face the possibility of fines, imprisonment or even a rerun poll.

It is widely acknowledged that in many marginal seats, parties often exceed or evade the legal expense limits at general elections (currently about £9,000). But, as I shall be telling the Neill Committee on Standards in Public Life today, the real abuses occur in by-elections. Parties regularly overspend on a huge scale, even though since the early 1990s the legal limit has been roughly four times that for general elections.

Any party hoping to win a big by-election nowadays will probably spend at least £100,000 on its campaign, and often much more. Yet only a fraction will be declared in the return that agents legally have to submit within 35 days of the result. The pile of receipts attached to each return will always add up to within a few pounds of the legal limit. Peter Chegwyn, a leading former Liberal agent, admits that the three main parties are often "way over the limit" on spending. A Tory by-election candidate from the last Parliament insisted that his campaign must stick within the law. Party colleagues looked at him as if he was mad. "In that case you'll lose," they told him. So the campaign over-spent, broke the law and lost anyway.

The parties cannot argue that these excesses are the work of a few over-enthusiastic local officials. By-election campaigns are national events, overseen by party headquarters in London. The funding comes from the centre, and prominent MPs are brought in to run the campaigns on the ground; in Labour's case, several past by-election organisers are now senior ministers. But once the bauble is over, the preparation of a false return is often left to the local official who was named agent, even though he or she may have had little say in what was actually spent. Concealing a convincing return requires considerable skills. "By-election agents don't just have to be experts at campaigning," says Mr Chegwyn, "but creative accountants as well."

The real escalation in by-election spending originated with the advent of the SDP in 1981, and their desperation to break the two-party mould of British politics. Before long, all three parties were spending at outrageous levels. Experts believe that two of the worst cases of them, the Fulham and Greenwich by-elections in the mid-1980s, where the old SDP is understood to have overspent by several times the then limit. In recent times the worst offender has been Labour. One former official at Labour headquarters even calculates that one by-election in the early 1990s may have cost the party close to half a million, if one includes staff costs.

Talk privately to most agents, and they will often laugh about how they get round the rules. Friendly printers will be persuaded, for instance, to produce receipts for much lower print runs than were produced. Many payments, such as casual staff, will be made in cash. Instead of using a postal franking machine, staff go out and buy stamps, and post offices in by-election towns do a roaring trade. Two new expensive campaign techniques have made matters worse. Both telephone canvassing and direct mail are often organised well away from the constituency, and are therefore difficult to detect or quantify.

Despite the cut-throat nature of by-elections, the regular breaking of the law is hidden by the collusion of the parties, its opponents, since they all know that they are equally guilty of a kind of fraud. Officials admit to a gentlemen's agreement not to challenge each other. "A conspiracy" is how one former official describes it.

The author is a reporter with the BBC's Newnight.

THE TIMES ... ALWAYS OLD ...

فكرنا من الأصل

Official: you can grow water on the lawn

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

Drought will be declared in the west of England...

...river flows are at an average for the time of year...

Giles Phillips, head of the Environment Agency...

Many companies are reporting low demand for water...

The drought has focused attention on the importance of managing demand...

Forecast page 3

family denied racial

DUEL

For most of the past four decades, Sudanese have been at war...

In southern Sudan, the dry spring months are the traditional 'hunger gap'...

There is as yet no famine in southern Sudan, although there is extreme distress...

Under the improbable but serviceable umbrella of the International Group for Agricultural Development...

There we have it. We are invited to hand over British independence, which Philip of Spain, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler failed to destroy...

Someone should explain clearly the immense benefits that we should receive, and the disadvantages that would follow.

Yours sincerely, MARY A. LYNCH, Nazareth House, Hammersmith Road, W6 8DB, April 23.

Access for disabled

From the Chairman of the National Disability Council

Sir, It is depressing to read in your Diary (April 20) that a conference on physical access for disabled people has had to be moved from the new British Library...

Architects, planners and builders should not be waiting for legal requirements on disabled people's access to come into force in order to address the issue with new buildings.

We do not want a compliance culture ('What is the least we can get away with at the last possible moment?'). We want a good-practice culture in the UK...

Yours faithfully, DAVID GRAYSON, Chairman, National Disability Council, Level 4, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA, April 21.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk



ALWAYS OLD, ALWAYS NEW

Israel reaches 50, but not a midlife crisis.

The state and people of Israel will officially celebrate the 50th anniversary of their refoundation today.

To many observers, especially outside its borders, it is these two factors — relative peace and rising prosperity — that will shape Israel's future.

There are reasons to fear a potential schism. Judaism has always contained a wide range of adherents under a single label.

teocracy. Demography will only sharpen these tensions.

The prospect of a wealth-driven social transformation is similarly seductive. A successful peace process would entrench it, but even under the current cold peace substantial progress is possible.

The chances are, though, that Israel will emulate neither Iran nor Switzerland. An accord with the Palestinians or Syria would not produce complete peace or final security.

In short, there is much of Israel's past that remains relevant to its future. It will still be a restless, innovative, society in less than hospitable surroundings.

HOPE IN HELL

There is no famine in Sudan yet, nor need there be one

For most of the past four decades, Sudanese have been at war, inflicting the cruellest suffering on the country's southern, Christian-animalist, south.

In southern Sudan, the dry spring months are the traditional 'hunger gap', when most people eat roots, kill animals and travel long distances to fish in order to survive.

There is as yet no famine in southern Sudan, although there is extreme distress. There need not be one.

The channel to use is the OLS, which is well established and, in theory, accepted by all combatants.

Under the improbable but serviceable umbrella of the International Group for Agricultural Development, which exists to resolve joint problems of soil erosion, locust control and water disputes in the Horn of Africa...

There we have it. We are invited to hand over British independence, which Philip of Spain, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler failed to destroy, in exchange for the euro.

Yours sincerely, MARY A. LYNCH, Nazareth House, Hammersmith Road, W6 8DB, April 23.

A CASE UNMADE

The Times, The Daily Telegraph and Mary Bell

Those who read the letters before the leaders will already know that the Editor of The Daily Telegraph is unhappy with an article by the Editor of The Times yesterday justifying our decision to publish Gitta Sereny's book about Mary Bell.

The serialisation of Cries Unheard is a serious issue. We would certainly not want our readers to be misled on any aspect of it, however small.

We have no cause to doubt that these were Mr Moore's true motives in rejecting 'Cries Unheard', even though this newspaper serialising such an important work. He said

that he 'respected Gitta's reasons for wanting money to go to her subject' and 'believed absolutely in Gitta's integrity'.

Today he finds that interpretation to be 'misleading'. He claims that he made his final decision to reject the book through anxiety about the feelings of Mary Bell's victims and his inability 'to justify any action on our part which would lead, even indirectly, to Mary Bell receiving money'.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Comparison of US and EU currencies

From Mr Mark Holland

Sir, Peter Riddell may well be right (April 24) that the possibility of the UK joining the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) in whatever capacity is not in the realm of practical politics.

There is more convergence between the UK and the US economies than there is between the UK and the continental European economies.

As the German economy looks more and more towards increasing trade with Eastern Europe, this phenomenon seems likely to continue and the convergence looked for by the Treasury as one of the criteria for the UK joining EMU will remain another illusion.

Any arrangement which would liberate trade between the US and the UK economies would benefit the UK consumer, and create a drop in the cost of living.

Yours faithfully, MARK HOLLAND, Blake Hall, Kensworth, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 3RH, mark.holland@compuserve.com April 26.

From Mr Christopher Story

Sir, Peter Riddell's statement 'on trade and economic issues, Britain's future lies in the EU — as an advocate of free and open trade' is, I believe, flawed.

The European Union is a political collective. Advocating a given policy in a collective is like whistling in the wind, since self-evidently it is the will of the collective, rather than that of the advocate, which will tend to prevail.

If Mr Riddell's final point that all 'serious American policymakers' want Britain inside the EU (to advocate free and open trade) is true, this would confirm my own experience as a frequent visitor to Washington over the past 22 years — that American policymakers have a very little understanding of the European Union.

Yours faithfully, CHRISTOPHER STORY (Editor, International Currency Review), 108 Horseley Road, Westminster, SWP 2EF, April 24.

Dubious exchange

From Miss Mary A. Lynch

Sir, Yesterday I read these words of Chancellor Kohl (report, April 22): 'It is vital for the stability of the currency that states settle at the summit their disagreement over the chief of the team that will exercise almost absolute power (my necessary emphasis) over monetary policy in the euro zone.'

There we have it. We are invited to hand over British independence, which Philip of Spain, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm and Adolf Hitler failed to destroy, in exchange for the euro.

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Yours faithfully, DAVID GRAYSON, Chairman, National Disability Council, Level 4, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA, April 21.

Contradictions of 'uncool' Ulster

From Mr Peter Rae

Sir, Matthew Parris, characteristically, has hit the nail on the head in his analysis of the mooves facing Northern Ireland — Links to break the chain' (April 24). The Irish Republic in 1998 has much to offer the people of Northern Ireland.

I was born in Dublin and lived there for 20 years before moving to England where I have lived happily for 22 years. I also spent two years living in America. I can honestly say that I have always felt as much at home culturally in Kent, Essex and Connecticut as in Ireland.

One of the tragedies of Northern Ireland in the past 30 years is that so many people have spent so much time and effort fighting old battles while the rest of the world — and notably the Irish Republic — moved on.

Yes, vote, then the people of the Province can get on with living their lives in what the rest of us would regard as normal circumstances.

Yours faithfully, PETER RAE, 383 Mill Road, Mile End, Colchester, Essex CO4 5GG, praer@ruderfinn.co.uk April 24.

From Mr John Crookshank

Sir, It is entirely too superficial of Matthew Parris to sweep the Orangemen under the designer carpet he wishes on 'Cool Ulster'.

Now over 200 years old, the Orange Order played a key part in the Home Rule battles post-1880, and provided nearly all the senior Unionist politicians between 1922 and 1969.

Yours faithfully, JOHN CROOKSHANK, 16 Shanean Park, Belfast BT14 8JP, April 26.

Conflicts within a Jewish identity

From Professor Emeritus D. Tabor, FRSS

Sir, Your article of April 23, 'British Jews on the state of the nation', reminds me of the interview I had with a journalist during the Six Day War.

Yours faithfully, DAVID TABOR, 8 Rutherford Road, Cambridge CB2 2HF, April 23.

From Mrs Mary V. Cottrill

Sir, The Israeli hates his Arab neighbour 'because he worships a different

ship Strathdon reported an iceberg over 40 miles in length, and over 1,000 feet in height (Captain S. T. S. Locky's Wrinkles in Practical Navigation, George Philip and Son, 1944).

Perhaps these earlier examples of Antarctic icebergs point to cyclical weather patterns.

Yours faithfully, D. G. A. WILLIAMS, 10 Gurney Lane, Cringleford, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7SB, April 26.

Youth homelessness

From the Vice-Chairman and Treasurer of NCH Action for Children and others

Sir, Some progress has been made since NCH Action For Children launched a major campaign last year to end youth homelessness by the millennium, but much remains to be done.

The message of NCH Action's House our Youth 2000 campaign is clear: youth homelessness can be ended with the right mix of policy and practical solutions, carried forward by organisations and individuals, led by Government. People from all parties

Attack on Chapter by choir parents

From Mrs Lilla Beckett and others

Sir, As parents of choristers at Westminster Abbey, we should like to respond to the four canons (letter, April 28) who have accepted responsibility with the Dean for the dismissal of Dr Neary and his wife.

They write as if the matter were simply an unfortunate management problem, but they appear to forget that they are first and foremost ministers of God and leaders of a community which for many years has called itself the Abbey family, embracing all those involved in its daily life and worship in whatever capacity.

Yours faithfully, LILLA BECKETT, CHARLES S. BLAKENEY, MATTHEW PORTAL, ROBIN ROBERTS, MALCOLM RUTHVEN, STUART TURNER, 12 Wigmore Street, W1H 9DE, April 28.

Yours faithfully, LILLA BECKETT, CHARLES S. BLAKENEY, MATTHEW PORTAL, ROBIN ROBERTS, MALCOLM RUTHVEN, STUART TURNER, 12 Wigmore Street, W1H 9DE, April 28.

Yours faithfully, LILLA BECKETT, CHARLES S. BLAKENEY, MATTHEW PORTAL, ROBIN ROBERTS, MALCOLM RUTHVEN, STUART TURNER, 12 Wigmore Street, W1H 9DE, April 28.

Mary Bell book

From Mr Mark Esdale

Sir, I am sure that the Prime Minister's remarks about the payments to Mary Bell represent the feelings of the vast majority of us.

Yours faithfully, MARK ESDALE, The East House, Brook Street, Easley, Sandwich, Kent CT13 0HR, esdale@the-east-house.co.uk April 29.

Yours faithfully, JANET M. KOWALSKI, 53 The Gateway, Woodham, Woking, Surrey GU21 5SL, April 24.

Yours faithfully, CHARLES MOORE, Editor, The Daily Telegraph, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, E14 5DT, April 29.

Yours faithfully, PHILIP J. HOWARD, 13 High Street, Sermington, Trobridge, Wiltshire BA14 6JR, 101444.3175@compuserve.com

Yours etc, P. J. HOWARD, 13 High Street, Sermington, Trobridge, Wiltshire BA14 6JR, 101444.3175@compuserve.com

Yours etc, P. J. HOWARD, 13 High Street, Sermington, Trobridge, Wiltshire BA14 6JR, 101444.3175@compuserve.com

Business-speak

From Mr Robin Martin

Sir, As a keen student of business-speak, I have watched 'haulage' on the sides of lorries being replaced by 'transport' and (lately) 'logistics'.

Yours faithfully, ROBIN MARTIN, 12 Gerard Road, Barnes, SW13 9RG.

Take your pick

From Sir Jack Hibbert

Sir, Apparently I can now buy electricity from British Gas for 5.57 pence per unit compared with 6.12 pence per unit from London Electricity and I can buy gas from London Electricity for 1.98 pence per kilowatt hour compared with 1.25 pence per kilowatt hour from British Gas.

Yours faithfully, JACK HIBBERT, 180 Kings Hall Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1LJ, April 25.

Advertisement for World Vision, featuring a child's face and text about water and food in Sudan.



COURT CIRCULAR

WINDSOR CASTLE April 28: The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh gave a Reception at Windsor Castle this evening for those connected with the Arts, at which The Prince Edward, The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, and Princess Alexandra, the Hon Lady Ogilvy, accompanied by the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, were present.

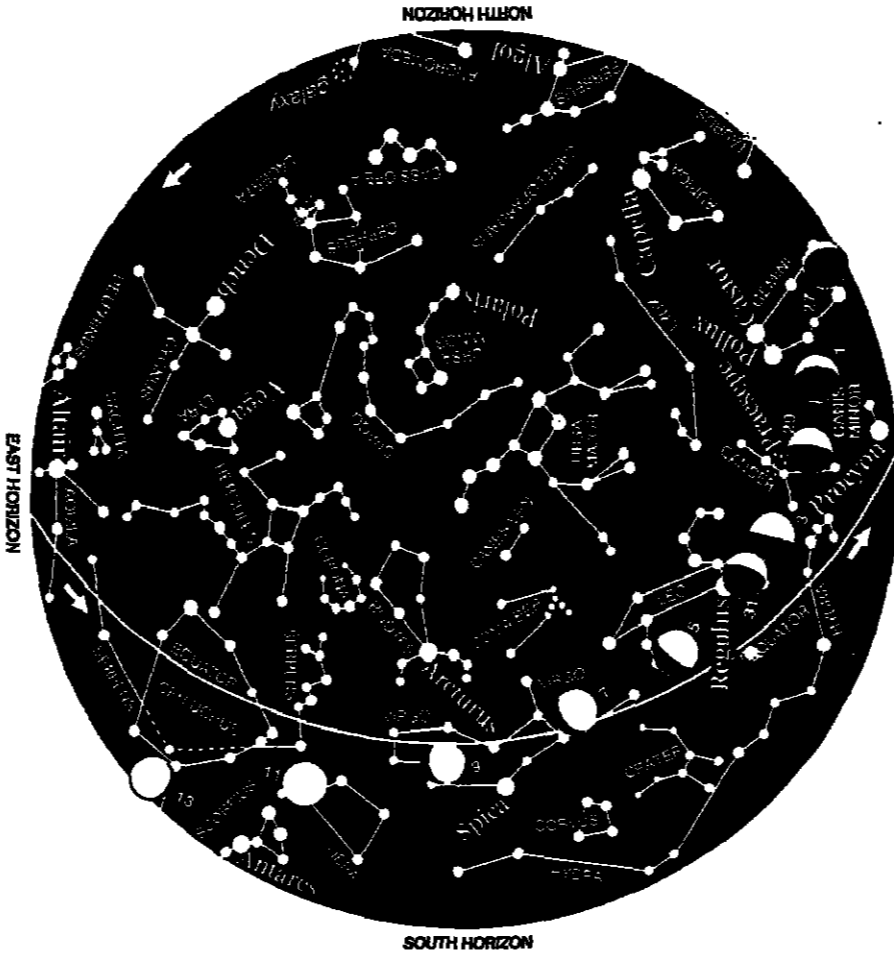
Church news

Appointments The Rev Bill Anders, part-time Curate, Kewby in Wiltshire, and part-time Assistant Chaplain, HMP: Full Sutton (York); to be Vicar, Norton (same diocese).

The night sky in May

By MICHAEL J HENDRIE, ASTRONOMY CORRESPONDENT

MERCURY is a morning star reaching greatest western elongation (7 degrees) on the 4th but is too close to the Sun to be observable from our northern latitudes.



The diagram shows the brighter stars that will be above the horizon in the latitude of London at 23h (11 pm) at the beginning, 22h (10 pm) in the middle, and 21h (9 pm) at the end of the month, local mean time.

late before even the brighter stars are easily observable and then the constellations themselves are mostly less well defined than Orion, Gemini and Pegasus for example. When a bright planet is in a constellation it provides an easy identification: the Moon can be used in the same way but around the time of the full phase its glare may hide all but the brightest stars of nearby constellations.

Latest wills

Anthony Frederick Richard Jordan, of Norwich, Norfolk, left estate valued at £559,878 net. Charles Eric Kidman, of Cambridge, left estate valued at £644,169 net.

Birthdays today

The King of Sweden celebrates his 52nd birthday today. Sir James Adams, former diplomat, 66; Mr Peter Ahrends, architect, 66; Dr G.E. Aymer, CBE, former Master, St Peter's College, Oxford, 72; Mrs Janet Buchan, former MBE, 72; Mrs Barbara Calvert, MBE, 72; His Honour Sir Robin David, QC, 76; Mr Dickie Davies, sports commentator, 65; Lord Diamond, 91; Mr Leslie Grantham, actor, 52; Mr G.M. Guthrie, former chief executive, Mecca Leisure, 57; Mr Tony Harrison, poet, 61; Mr R.J.D. Hazell, director, Constellation Unit, 50; Mr Alfred Lomas, MBE, 73; Lord McIntosh of Hartree, 65; Mr Keith Povey, HM Inspector of Constabulary, 53; Lord Sanderson of Bowden, 65.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr K.A. Beaton and Miss A.A.M. Gibbons The engagement is announced between Kenneth son of Mr and Mrs Peter Beaton, of Leeds, Glasgow, and Amelia, daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Gibbons, of Levens, Cumbria.

Service dinner

Intelligence Corps Major P.A. Richardson presided at a final dinner in Stavanger Signal Station after 45 years' operational service in Norway.

Dinners

Chief Police Officers The Lord Mayor and the Secretary of State for the Home Department were the principal guests at the annual dinner of the Chief Police Officers held last night at Guildhall.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: St Jean Baptiste de la Salle Brothers, Rhine, 165th Queen Mary II, reigned with King William III 1689-94. London, 1662; John Lubbock, 1st Baron Avebury, banker and scientist, London, 1834; Franz Lehár, composer, Komorn, Hungary, 1870.

University news

Lisiane College To official fellowships: Dr David M. R. Evans, in collaboration with the Queen's University Belfast Centre for Research in the History of Science and Technology, and the British Science Research Council, JPLI, will be a research fellow in the history of science and technology.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880 PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982 FAX: 0171 481 9313

BIRTHS BRADLEY - On April 22nd 1998, to Lucy (nee Hale) and Paul Bradley, a daughter, Elizabeth Louise Jane.

DEATHS BIRCHON - Peacefully on 27th April in hospital, Barbara Gwynne, aged 83, leaving behind her husband, James, and three children.

DEATHS LACEY - Elizabeth Helen, aged peacefully at Princess Alice Hospital, father on 26th April, aged 85, leaving behind her husband, John, and three children.

IN MEMORIAM PRIVATE MORGON - In loving memory of a devoted husband and father, Thomas Edward (Tom) who died April 30th 1998, aged 82 years.

PERSONAL COLUMN advertisement for 'PERSONAL COLUMN' featuring 'TICKETS' and 'PERSONAL COLUMN' text.

OBITUARIES advertisement for 'OBITUARIES' featuring 'OBITUARIES' text and a large 'N' graphic.

OBITUARIES

NGUYEN VAN LINH

Nguyen Van Linh, former General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, died on April 27 aged 82. He was born on July 1, 1915.



Nguyen Van Linh became General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1986, when he was appointed to succeed Truong Chinh at the Party's Sixth Congress. He stood down, having fallen from favour, at the Seventh Congress in 1991. During his time in office he did much to end his country's international isolation, and began the process of reforming its stagnant economy. In the course of some 70 years of revolutionary activity he had acquired a firm reputation for integrity and asceticism: even in retirement, he remained an outspoken critic of waste and corruption in public life. Ultimately, however, he was frustrated in his attempts to infuse new life into the socialist system, and at the same time incapable of abandoning socialist principles altogether. Though he himself would not have cared for it (not quite accurate) description, he may well be remembered as a Vietnamese version of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Nguyen Van Linh had first come to prominence as party secretary in Ho Chi Minh city (formerly Saigon) from 1975 to 1985, and before that had been active as one of the clandestine leaders of the southern struggle against the United States and the pro-American regime in Saigon. By origin, however, he was a northerner, having been born in a village close to Hanoi where his father was a smallholder.

In the political ferment of 1929, when he was only 14, he joined a pro-Communist association of school students in Haiphong but was arrested six months later for distributing leaflets. As a result he spent the years 1930-36 in prison, mostly on the notorious island of Con-Dao (Paulo Condore), where he would have had the chance to meet Le Duan, Le Duc Tho, Pham Van Dong and several others who were subsequently prominent in the party leadership.

On his release, under an amnesty granted by the French Popular Front Government, he joined the Indo-Chinese Communist Party in 1936 and went back to Haiphong as a grassroots activist. In 1940 he was sent to help to reorganise the party in Central Vietnam, only to be arrested and sent to Con-Dao for a second time from 1941 to 1945. Again he was probably in the company of Le Duan, Le Duc Tho and Pham Hung — all three of whom were active in southern Vietnam in the anti-French struggle which began in 1945. Nguyen Van Linh joined them, becoming secretary of the underground party

organisation in Saigon and eventually a leading member of the party committee for the whole of Nam-Bò (the former French Cochinchina).

In 1956-57, when the others went north to take up important positions in Hanoi, Linh stayed behind. Apart from occasional visits to the North to attend important meetings, he remained in the South for the whole of the period of partition (1955-75) and for much of that time seems to have been second-in-command to successive Politburo members sent south to lead the anti-American struggle. In the nature of things, Westerners learnt little of his highly secret activities as one of the real directors of the supposedly non-Communist National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. He emerged into public view, as party leader in Saigon, only after 1975.

In late 1976, at the Party's Fourth Congress, he was promoted to full membership of the Politburo and also joined the Central Secretariat. From

1978 to 1981 he was leader of the Trade Union Federation. After returning to Saigon in the latter year, he became associated with a new phase of economic experimentation there; but that brought him into conflict with more "conservative" elements in the Party leadership. At the Fifth Congress in March 1982 he found himself dropped from both the Politburo and the Central Secretariat.

His recovery of influence owed something to the changing mood in the communist world as a whole, especially after the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Communist Party in Moscow. By that time, having become entangled in a conflict with China as well as a military occupation of Cambodia, Vietnam was more dependent than ever upon Soviet assistance and advice.

In the summer of 1985 Nguyen Van Linh reappeared as a Politburo member, and a year later was again a member of the Central Secretariat. In

July 1986, the death of Le Duan, who had been the effective leader of the party for 17 years since the demise of Ho Chi Minh, led to a succession crisis. Although Truong Chinh — as the next senior figure in the leadership — took over as General Secretary, it soon became clear that Nguyen Van Linh was now a key figure whose guidance on policy was to be taken seriously.

At the Sixth Congress, in December 1986, it was agreed that Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong and Le Duc Tho would all "retire" from the Politburo and serve merely as "advisers" to the new General Secretary, Linh. It was, therefore, Linh who took the lead in promoting a Vietnamese version of perestroika (in Vietnamese, doi-moi), which included no significant political reforms but did lead to a liberalisation of the socialist economy. He became the first party leader since Ho Chi Minh to allow himself to be interviewed by the Western press.

There were still vested interests to be overcome, and Linh was himself innately conservative in many ways, but down to the spring of 1999 it seemed as if reform was steadily winning. However, in the aftermath of the political crackdown in China and the opening up of political reform in Eastern Europe, it was clear that Vietnam's party leadership had no intention of following the European example. On the other hand, Linh had also presided over a policy of withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia, and it was still hoped that in due course an expansion of investment by the capitalist world would contribute to a Vietnamese economic recovery.

Linh, willingly or not, gave a sharply conservative speech to the Central Committee's plenary session of August 1989. For the time being, reform seemed to be slowing down. Linh's own star was also waning, and at the Party Congress of 1991 he stepped down as General Secretary, though he remained, at least in name, a valued policy adviser.

Nguyen Van Linh was always noted for his frugality and honesty. He was a merciless critic of bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption, going so far in 1987 as to write a number of articles (signed with his initials) for the party newspaper attacking individual instances of such failings. He came to feel that the economic reforms he had helped to introduce had led to a decline in morals and an increase in opportunities for the abuse of power. His criticism of poor standards in public life and of foreign exploitation of Vietnam remained outspoken after he retired.

He is survived by his widow Ngo Thi Hue and by their children.

JIMMY SKIDMORE

Jimmy Skidmore, jazz tenor saxophonist, died on April 24 aged 82. He was born in London on February 8, 1916.



IN THE late 1950s, Humphrey Lyttelton described Jimmy Skidmore as "the finest player in the country", and during the four years that Skidmore played in Lyttelton's band, 1957-60, he proved his credentials in a series of exemplary appearances. His remarkable solo on Lyttelton's 1960 disc of *Body and Soul* shows his originality, without ever losing sight of Coleman Hawkins's pioneering interpretation of the tune, and offers a glimpse of the level of playing he brought to Humphrey's tours with American jazzmen such as Buck Clayton, and to the band's regular broadcasts on Granada Television and Radio Luxembourg.

It is to Lyttelton, too, that posterity owes the most astute pen-portrait of Skidmore, from the autobiographical *Second Chorus*, which described Skidmore's "huge ruddy grin" and his penchant for "cheery banter and cheeky backchat". His few years with Lyttelton brought Skidmore's work to the attention of a large audience, and apart from a short period of absence through illness, his ebullient personality helped the band to retain a popular audience at a time when it was making considerable stylistic changes. With Lyttelton, he travelled to America meeting many of the great names in jazz including Thelonious Monk and Julius Watkins.

James Richard Skidmore was born in Manor Park, and came to music relatively late in life, taking up the saxophone only at the age of 20. He had previously played the guitar, which gave him a working knowledge of harmony, and he quickly established himself in a variety of bands in north-west London. His reputation among other musicians was greatly enhanced by his ability to jam competitively in the rhythm clubs that were a feature of the prewar London jazz scene.

During the war years, he worked with many of London's best-known band-leaders, including George Shearing, Harry Parry, Harry Roy and Eric Winstone, before forging a long-term partnership with Vic Lewis. He was among the all-star British musicians who travelled under Derek Neville's leadership to the 1948 Jazz Festival in Nice, which is where he first met Lyttelton.

In the 1950s, he worked with a great variety of musicians, notably Ralph Sharon, Kenny Baker and Eric Delaney. In 1956 he made his first records under his own name, with two sessions for Nixa, both involving the mercurial drummer Phil Seamen, and the second combining British mainstream players such as George Chisholm with West Indian musicians including Jiver Hutchinson and Bertie King.

It was not until the 1970s that Skidmore recorded again under his own name, by which time there had been a period of great change in British jazz. The arrival of players like Tubby Hayes who had successfully adapted to American post-bop styles of jazz meant that Skidmore was no longer pre-eminent. He once said that when he first heard the bebop experiments of Charlie Parker he thought: "I'll never play like that... and I didn't."

Despite his talent and reputation, Skidmore worked through the 1960s and 1970s as a freelance, ever further from the centre of developments in the music, although his son Alan (born in 1942) embraced them wholeheartedly and became one of the most influential players in British modern jazz, after replacing his father in Eric Delaney's band. The two played together occasionally in father-and-son line-ups, but Jimmy more often appeared in the company of fellow mainstemers such as Kathy Stobart and Willie Garnett.

In the mid-1960s, Skidmore also began to work outside music, as a publicist and in retail, but he continued to play regularly. "After 1961, I just faded away," he wrote. "I was waiting for the phone to go more than anything." His 1972 disc *Skid Marks* found him back in the congenial company of saxophonists Willie Garnett and Ronnie Ross, and for the last two decades of his life he was generally to be found playing this style of highly accomplished mainstream jazz. He ran his own group, called his Friends, and also played with Bob Graham. He celebrated his 80th birthday with a session with his son, and the occasion was also marked by a BBC radio broadcast.

He is survived by his wife and their son, Alan.

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN MOTTRAM

Major-General John Mottram CB, LVO, OBE, Major-General Training and Reserve Forces, Royal Marines, 1960-63, and Chief Executive, General Council of the Bar, 1987-94, died of cancer on April 27 aged 67. He was born on June 9, 1930.

WITH no service background, John Frederick Mottram joined the Royal Marines from Enfield Technical College in October 1948, winning the Sword of Honour on completion of his training. The wide variety of his subsequent duties and appoint-

ments could be said to symbolise the adaptability and versatility that the Marine Corps likes to claim for its own.

His first operational service was as a troop subaltern of 42 Commando in Perak during the anti-terrorist campaign in northern Malaya in 1951. Perak is about the size of Wales and abuts the border of Thailand; the terrain consists of hot and soggy jungle populated by leeches and other unpleasant fauna. The enemy, Chinese Communists and their sympathisers, pursued classic guerrilla tactics: intimidating the population, murdering local policemen, living off and melting into the landscape. The

Royal Marines had to become experts at this form of "colonial" warfare where victory and defeat are a matter of degree. Mottram earned a sound jungle warfare reputation, his company commander's report remarking on his skill in keeping his men fit, comfortable and operational.

After 42 Commando had returned to garrison duty in Malta, Mottram volunteered for the SAS, the Special Boat Service, rising to command a squadron. In 1957 he led one of the first Royal Marine detachments for many years to serve in a frigate, the *Loch Lomond*, in the Gulf. Here the challenge

was not only to persuade the small-ship sailors that the "boobies" could make a sea-manlike contribution, but to maintain a well-trained and acclimatised landing party under often harsh conditions.

His next appointment more nearly approached the Royal Marine of the publicity posters: his large and powerfully built frame, always impeccably turned out, made him an imposing figure as Parade Adjutant of the Infantry Training Centre, with a hard eye for lapses in discipline or errors in drill.

Graduating from the Army Staff College in 1963, he went to the Ministry of Defence on

the staff of the Commandant General, duties of which he also discharged during an Extra Equerry to the Duke of Edinburgh. Promoted major in 1965, he served again for a short period in 42 Commando before going back to the Far East as Bridge Major of 3 Commando Brigade. From 1961 to 1971 this formation was based in Singapore; Mottram's own tour was busy and included the Brigade's contribution to the planning and execution of the British withdrawal from the Aden Protectorate in November 1967, the two Royal Marine Commands involved being the last troops to leave. He was appointed OBE in 1969.

Recognition of his intellect and his reputation as a talented staff officer sent him back to the Army Staff College as a member of the directing staff. He was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and then took command of 40 Commando, heading the unit with his own brand of forceful leadership for two highly effective operational tours in Northern Ireland.

His first tour, from June to October 1972, encompassed Operation Motorman, the massive operation mounted on July 31 to break the "no-go" areas of Belfast. The year 1972 saw the peak of terrorist violence and the Commando had three Marines killed and 17 injured. They suffered no casualties in the 1973 deployment, despite, for example, carrying out four times as many vehicle checks



(115,000), one-and-a-half times as many searches of derelict houses (3,133), and "lifting" out of circulation of 91 terrorists. Mottram was awarded a mention in dispatches.

In 1974 he was appointed to a place at the US Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and then joined the

British Defence Staff in Washington as Chief of Staff. Mottram soon made a name for himself as a professional speaker on the Irish question, using his undoubted authority and experience to explain it to not always sympathetic audiences. His organisation of the Queen's visit to the United States in 1976 brought him

appointment as LVO. He returned home in 1977. A tour in the Ministry of Defence on the staff of the Commandant General was followed by promotion to major-general in 1980 and an appointment in command of Royal Marine Training and Reserve Forces. The robust and self-reliant approach that he engendered was rewarded by the Royal Marines' successes in the Falklands War of 1982. He was made a CB on retirement in 1983.

His organisational skills were immediately redeployed as director general of the Feruliser Manufacturers' Association, a trade association dealing with the legislative, environmental and presentational issues affecting this important part of the British chemical industry both at Westminster and in Brussels. He was responsible for initiating in 1985 a far-sighted and active environmental policy, spreading positive environmental attitudes.

After three years he was recruited as the first chief executive of the General Council of the Bar following upon the separation of that body from the Senate of the Inns of Court. Mottram played a major role in establishing the Bar Council as a professionally run and effective regulatory and administrative body. His retirement in 1994 was due to ill-health.

He is survived by his wife Jenny, whom he married in 1956, and by their son and daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

TICKETS FOR SALE... ALL TICKETS! Wimbledon Debutante Royal Ascot, Epsom Derby...

TICKETS WINDMILL THEATRE INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT ROYAL ASCOT...

OVERSEAS TRAVEL... PORTUGAL & Madeira, All areas...

ANNOUNCEMENTS THE TIMES OPENING TIMES/DEADLINES FOR BIRTH, MARRIAGE & DEATH NOTICES...

CORPORATE HOSPITALITY... ROYAL ASCOT, TETLEY BITTER WORLD CUP...

FOR SALE... A BRISTOL Homeport, Original, 1950s...

ANNOUNCEMENTS... 20 lots for sale with varied outdoor pool...

Imperial College OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICINE PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH FUND...

Churchill's are the only stairlift company... Call Churchill's 0800 371 982...

NBI YOUR WILL... can help so many elderly people who have given up much...

COURT & SOCIAL... FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGES... Please send Court page announcements by post...

"COMPUTER SICKNESS" - A DANGER OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY NEED TO PLAN MENTAL CLIMATE... From Our Special Correspondent Eastbourne, April 29...

ON THIS DAY April 30, 1965... Reports of the effect on the health of computer workers are not uncommon today, but 30 years ago, Unilever noticed that programmers and systems analysts worked too hard and worried themselves sick to the extent that eight out of 14 went down with every conceivable condition...

NEWS

Dobson attacks medical litigation

Frank Dobson yesterday accused lawyers of milking the health service of money needed to treat patients, as he launched a campaign to cut the steadily growing cost of medical litigation. "As far as I am concerned, the best place for a lawyer in the NHS is on the operating table, not sliding around causing trouble for other people," the Health Secretary told the Royal College of Midwives. Page 1

Blair condemns Bell payment

The Prime Minister yesterday joined the row over the child-killer Mary Bell by condemning the payment made to her for collaborating on a book about her life. Tony Blair said it was "inherently repugnant" that people should make money out of "terrible crimes". Page 1

Royal party list

The film stars Euan MacGregor and Robert Carlyle led the new generation of showbusiness talent who partied with the Queen amid the splendour of St George's Hall last night. Page 1

IRA officers named

A former IRA member was arrested in Dublin yesterday after testifying in a Dublin court that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were senior officers. Page 3

Lawyers under fire

The Lord Chancellor's department renewed its attack on high-earning legal-aid lawyers, clashing with solicitors who denounced it for "naming and shaming" them. Page 6

Cancer charities

Too many cancer charities are competing for funds, causing great waste, according to the head of one of the largest research bodies. Page 7

Sentencing attacked

Lenient sentencing of young offenders is partly to blame for the theft of cars worth £2 billion every year, the Home Secretary said yesterday. Page 9

Plot couple spared

A couple who plotted to kill their only daughter in a suicide pact escaped jail yesterday after a judge was told that drugs caused the crisis in their lives. Page 11

Last tickle for trout and salmon

The delicate art of trout tickling is to be banned under new bylaws intended to stamp out poaching and prevent the spread of disease among fish. The Environment Agency said trout tickling, or groping, would be covered by proposed bylaw number five. Any person caught removing salmon or trout in this way faces a fine of up to £2,000. Page 5

Back at Butlin's

Anthea Turner was in Skegness on the famously bracing Lincolnshire coast yesterday, endeavouring to persuade customers that Butlin's had re-invented the holiday camp. Page 13

Blair and the NHS

Labour gave birth to the NHS and it has grown into one of our favourite but stickiest sons. No matter how much it consumes, it always seems close to collapse. Labour in power. Page 14

Food alert in Spain

Tourists in southwest Spain have been told to watch for poisoned foodstuffs after the spillage of a billion gallons of toxic mining waste into rivers around Doñana National Park. Page 15

Kosovo uprising

The Kosovo Liberation Army yesterday pledged to take more action against Serb forces. The group demanded to be included in any peace talks. Page 16

Military appointment

Lieutenant-General Sipiwe Nyanda, a former guerrilla whose brother was killed by white soldiers, is to head South Africa's armed forces. Page 18

Israel divided

Celebrations to mark Israel's 50th anniversary opened last night, dogged by discord to the last as religious and secular Jews found themselves at odds. Page 19



Corporal Don Mason of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, which is on guard at Buckingham Palace for the next month

BUSINESS

Traffic jam: Vickers tried to slam the door on Volkswagen yesterday by insisting that it had drawn up a final contract to sell Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to BMW for £340 million. Page 29

Heady brew: An American company has acquired the London-based Seattle Coffee Company, founded by a husband-and-wife team, for £50 million. Page 29

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 26.5 to 5,833.1. On the foreign exchange the pound rose .23 cents to \$1.6708 and .15 pence to DM2.9971. The pound index rose to 106.2 from 106.1. Page 32

SPORT

Football: Attilio Lombardo has stepped down as player-manager of Crystal Palace. The chairman, Ron Noades, and the coach, Ray Lewington, will take charge of team affairs. Page 52

Snooker: John Higgins reached the world championship semi-finals with a 13-11 win over John Parrott. Higgins set a record, making three century breaks in succession. Page 56

Cricket: Franklyn Rose, the West Indies fast bowler, took five for 14 as Northants beat Minor Counties by five wickets in the Benson and Hedges Cup. Page 53

ARTS

Mind the doors: The week's new movies reviewed, including the British film Sliding Doors, written and directed by the actor Peter Howitt, with Gwyneth Paltrow and John Hannah. Page 41

Shallow waters: Harold Prince's well-oiled Show Boat steams into the West End from New York, complete with its ramshackle plot, superficial characters and great tunes. Page 42

Museum muddle: Our museums are lurching from crisis to crisis, says Sir Nicholas Goodison, chairman of the National Art Collections Fund. He has a solution. Page 43

FEATURES

Mary Bell: Day two of extracts from Cries Unheard. The trial and its aftermath. Pages 20, 21

Millennium marvel: Dr Thomas Stuttaford on the miracle vizium. Page 22

Easy writer: Christopher Reeve, paralysed Superstar, talks about his book. Page 23

TRAVEL

Best buys: Golfing in Algarve; two-night breaks in the Cotswolds and tours of famous gardens. Page 38

Business travel: What's on offer to win, and keep, the executive traveller. Pages 37-39

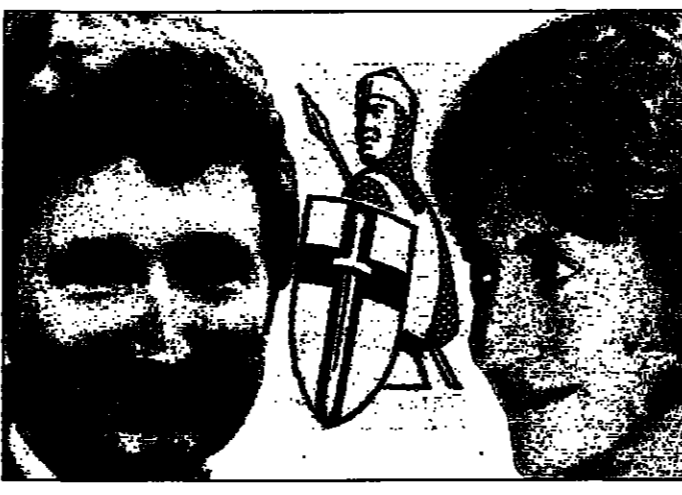
Time's up: Roger Scruton calls time on Heidegger; Michele Roberts is charmed by the sensual pleasures of Isabel Allende's latest work. Pages 41, 42

By thumping majorities, the French and German parliaments gave the go-ahead last week to the single European currency. But, in each case, the outcome was less reassuring than the vote suggested. Eight months before its launch date, more uncertainty surrounds the euro than its creators are willing to admit. The Moscow Times

TOMORROW IN THE TIMES

MEDIA Mail-shot: Why Lord Hollick hired Rosie Boycott to edit The Express and take on the Daily Mail

EDUCATION Assessing six-year-olds - American-style



THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,779

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down sections.

- ACROSS
1 Dreadfully offend a tar everywhere on board (4,3,3).
6 Outside parts of cake I had covered thus? (4).
9 Said whether I could provide meteorological expertise (7,3).
10 Poor-quality houses endlessly collapse (4).
12 Portraying eccentrics, some of Carroll's characters (7,5).
15 Sea, up? (9).
17 Gaffer fine ordered by king (5).
18 Temporary accommodation hard to find after nine (5).
19 Instruct drunk about English drinks (9).
20 Where all the world was a stage? (5,7).
24 Almost dark, but not quite (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20778, showing the filled-in crossword grid.

FORECAST

General: Eastern areas dull and misty with drizzle at times, and a cool northeast wind; heavy from the coast counties, the cloud will slowly break, with sunny spells developing. Western areas will see long spells of sunshine with the odd light shower. Tonight in western areas, showers will quickly die out to leave clear spells. Eastern Scotland and the rest of England rather overcast and breezy with drizzle near North Sea and Channel coasts.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table showing weather conditions around Britain yesterday, including temperature, wind, and precipitation for various regions.

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Table showing hours of darkness for various locations, including sunrise and sunset times.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

FORECAST

Wales, NW England, Lakes, IOM: Sunshine will develop, especially to the lee of hills. Mod NE breeze. Max 17C (63F). Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland: Overcast, mist, drizzle, especially towards coast. Perhaps brighter inland later. Mod NE breeze. Max 13C (55F). SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll, N Ireland: Blue skies and sunshine. The odd afternoon shower. Light NE breeze. Max 16C (61F). Orkney, Shetland: Grey and overcast with patchy mist and drizzle. Light northerly breeze. Max 11C (52F). Republic of Ireland: Sunny spells, a few showers. Cooling moderate or fresh north winds. Max 14C (57F). Outcrops: Low cloud and mist will cling to east coasts of England; most other parts dry with sunny breaks. Cloud and light rain will reach Scotland by Saturday.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table showing weather conditions around Britain yesterday, including temperature, wind, and precipitation for various regions.

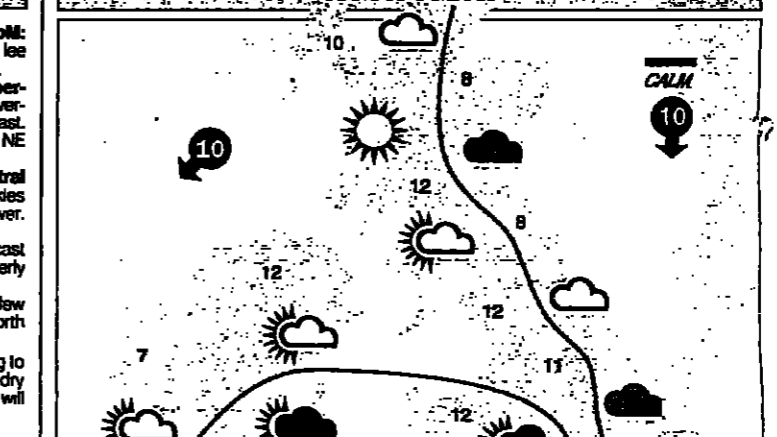
HOURS OF DARKNESS

Table showing hours of darkness for various locations, including sunrise and sunset times.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

NOON TODAY



AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

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HIGH TIDES

Table showing high tide times for various locations across the British Isles.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Table showing the highest and lowest temperatures recorded across the British Isles.

Large advertisement for Vickers BMW and Rolls Royce cars, featuring the text 'Vickers BMW Rolls Royce' and 'Starbucks homes in'.

Travel insurance advertisement: Travel as many times as you like from £49.95 a year. Available to non-Caribbean members. 0800 700 737. No need to compromise.

Handwritten Arabic text: 'مكتبة من الأصل' (Library from the original).

THE TIMES

2

INSIDE SECTION

2 TODAY



BUSINESS

Unwary caught in a Web of deceit
PAGE 31



ARTS

Parallel lives for Gwyneth Paltrow in her new film
PAGES 41-43



SPORT

White continues pursuit of elusive world title
PAGES 47-56

TELEVISION AND RADIO

PAGES 54, 55

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY APRIL 30 1998

VW to counter £340m bid with £500m

Vickers insists BMW deal for Rolls is final

BY ADAM JONES

VICKERS tried to slam the door on Volkswagen yesterday by insisting it has drawn up a final contract to sell Rolls-Royce Motor Cars to BMW for £340 million, and vowing to return £197 million to shareholders.

However, Volkswagen claims it is still aiming to make a higher offer of up to £500 million and Sir Colin Chandler, Vickers chairman, conceded he would be obliged to take a new bid seriously if it was concrete and in shareholders' interests.

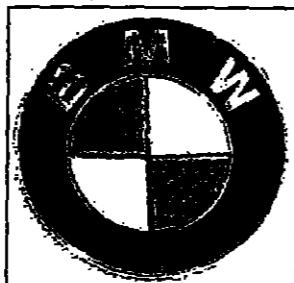
Sir Colin said at the Vickers annual meeting that the preliminary agreement made with BMW a month ago is now final as far as the directors of both groups are concerned.

Volkswagen has been locked out of the sale talks for the past month after submitting an initial bid that Vickers insists was lower than BMW's. A VW spokesman in Germany said the drawing-up of the BMW contract was no surprise, given that BMW and Vickers have been in exclusive negotiation for that period.

The period of exclusivity ends today, however, and sources close to the VW supervisory board claim that a new offer could be worth £400-£500 million. The sum depends on whether the Cosworth engines arm or other Vickers activities are included.

The BMW deal still needs approval from Vickers shareholders in early June. At the Vickers annual meeting yesterday, many private shareholders were clearly upset that Rolls was almost certain to pass from British ownership.

One woman who bought into Rolls-Royce as a patriotic gesture after it went bankrupt



devalue the brand. Donald Longmore, another enthusiast involved in plans to keep Rolls British, said the sale was a "tragedy for UK plc".

The cash purchase price agreed with BMW of £340 million will be augmented by additional money to cover stocks of the new Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph and Bentley Arnage that have built up for their market debut.

Including the additional value of ongoing Rolls contracts agreed between BMW and the Vickers pressings and Cosworth engines arms, the total package could be worth about £400 million.

A Volkswagen bid would still have to overcome the hurdle of getting approval from Rolls-Royce plc, the aircraft engine maker, for use of the Rolls-Royce name and bonnet badge on the cars.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is currently licensed to use them at no charge but an agreement drawn up in the early 1970s allows Rolls-Royce plc to veto a foreign owner.

Vickers has battled against this clause, saying that it has received legal advice that it is not enforceable. Rolls-Royce insists that it still holds the veto and has made it clear that BMW, a joint venture partner for nearly ten years, will not face any difficulty winning its approval.

A spokesman for Rolls-Royce plc said yesterday that it was too early to say whether Volkswagen would be seen as a fit home for the Rolls-Royce brand, but he made it clear that the preference is for BMW. "We don't know VW but we do know BMW."

The VW interest has baffled some analysts who had not seen Rolls as a natural choice for the German car group.

Commentary, page 31



Marjorie Scardino, the chief executive who has overseen big changes at Pearson, the media group, was yesterday awarded the *Veuve Clicquot Business Woman of the Year* at a ceremony at Claridges Hotel in Central London. Commentary, page 31

Little support found for SETS

BY MARTIN WALLER

SETS, the Stock Exchange's new order-driven trading system, came under two-pronged attack yesterday when two surveys suggested widespread dissatisfaction among those who are supposed to use the system.

Today is the last day for responses to SETS, which started to operate in October, and for suggestions on how it could be improved, as part of the Stock Exchange's own consultative programme.

The most authoritative study, from Reuters, the financial information company, and Tempest, a management consultant, suggested that the majority of fund managers are simply sidestepping SETS. Less than 40 per cent of trading is conducted through the system, the rest taking place directly between market-makers.

The centralised dealing desks at 37 of the largest fund managers were highly critical of order-driven trading. Almost 90 per cent thought it was slower, while 83 per cent thought liquidity had deteriorated as a result.

The second attack on SETS came from Tradepoint, the rival trading service, which after a poll of 40 institutional investors claimed these were getting "a very rough deal" under the new system.

A spokeswoman for the Stock Exchange said there had never been any expectation that more than 40 per cent of trading would eventually go through SETS, but that it had been successful as a price-setting mechanism, with three quarters of all deals using prices displayed on SETS screens.

"Change is hard, and people have to get used to new methods of trading and new ways of working," she said. Of the responses from fund managers logged by the Stock Exchange so far, more than half were "broadly positive".

City Diary, page 33

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDEXES	
FTSE 100	5533.1 (+26.5)
Yield	2.81%
FTSE All share	2750.41 (+8.90)
Nikkei	Closed
New York	
Dow Jones	884.26 (+58.30)
S&P Composite	1071.85 (+4.75)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	5 1/4% (5 1/4%)
Long Bond	100 1/2% (100 1/2%)
Yield	6.08% (6.07%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-mth Interbank	7 1/4% (7 1/4%)
Life long gilt	100% (100%)
Libor (6m)	100% (100%)

COMMODITIES	
New York	1.6707* (1.6675)
London	1.6712 (1.6683)
DM	2.9977 (2.9943)
FF	10.0820 (10.0400)
SFR	2.4882 (2.4808)
Yen	220.49 (220.83)
£ Index	106.2 (106.1)

CURRENCY EXCHANGE	
London	1.7955* (1.7950)
DM	6.0155* (6.0145)
FF	1.4955* (1.4925)
Yen	192.05* (192.25)
£ Index	109.5 (109.7)

TOKYO CLOSE YEN CLOSED	
100 Yen	111.15 (111.15)
100 Yen	111.15 (111.15)

BREXIT 15-day (Jun)	
100 Yen	914.90 (914.90)

LONDON CLOSE	
100 Yen	9308.75 (9307.50)

Battle for Energy Group nears end

BY ROBERT COLE
CITY CORRESPONDENT

THE year-long £4.5 billion takeover battle for Energy Group has moved to within days of a conclusion after a ground-breaking ruling from the Takeover Panel.

The key ruling will mean that the battle for control of Energy Group, which comprises Eastern Electricity in the UK and Peabody Coal in the US, will reach effective conclusion by the weekend.

Both bids by Oregon's PacificCorp and Texas Utilities received regulatory approval, but the Takeover Panel was worried that the regulators added complexity which could have disadvantaged Energy Group shareholders.

Normally, takeover bids are subject to strict timetables. In this case these were interrupted by the regulator. Once the process was restarted schedules for both bidders came together. This created possibilities that one party could outbid the other while leaving insufficient time for a response.

Yesterday's ruling means that if the bidders still wish to buy Energy Group they may present sealed Formula Bids to the Takeover Panel by 4pm on Friday. A Formula Bid is in two parts, stating that the bidder wishes to bid a certain amount, or at least 5p per share more than its rival, up to a ceiling.

Alistair Defriez, the Panel's director-general, said: "We thought this was the best option combining the simplicity with the competitive tension of an auction."

Starbucks founder homes in on Seattle

BY DOMINIC WALSH

WHEN Ally Svenson moved to London from Seattle in 1990 she was appalled at the tasteless cappuccino she found here and pined for her daily fix at a Starbucks coffee bar. Her decision to satisfy her craving by setting up her own chain of upmarket espresso bars came full circle yesterday when Starbucks acquired Seattle Coffee Company for around £50 million. "It feels a little like a homecoming," she said.

The acquisition of Seattle, which has grown to 50 stores since it was founded by Ally and Scott Svenson in 1995, kickstarts a long-awaited move into Europe for Starbucks. Howard Behar, president of Starbucks Coffee

Company, described the acquisition as "a first step towards a target of 500 stores in Europe by 2003". Another 34 units will open in the UK this year, boosting its current turnover of around £20 million.

Starbucks is paying for Seattle with 1.8 million of its own shares, equivalent to about \$85 million (£51 million). The Svensons, who will stay on to run the business, own about a quarter of the company, while its chairman, Ossie Kilkenny, the showbiz accountant who handles the affairs of the rock band U2, also has a stake.

Mr Behar admitted that the price, at about £1 million per store, appeared high, but he added: "It's hopes and

dreams. In the end, if we do what we think we can do with this, it will create great value." He said that all 56 stores — including the two in South Africa — would be rebadged as Starbucks. The deal, due for completion next month, will take the Starbucks portfolio past 1,700.

Further evidence of the coffee boom will be provided in the next few days when City Gourmets, owner of the Madison's chain, unveils a reverse takeover of Lanica Trust, the quoted vehicle of the controversial entrepreneur Andrew Regan. Another rival, AIM-listed Coffee Republic, has just raised £8.5 million for expansion.

Soft landing forecast for UK economy

THE UK economy should enjoy a soft landing as long as sterling falls from its current heights and interest rates are allowed to fall, says the latest forecast from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (Janet Bush writes).

However, even if monetary policy eases, there is still a one-in-three chance of an overall decline in output this year and a one-in-four chance of a recession next.

The institute forecasts growth of 2 per cent this year but only 1.6 per cent next. This is based on the assumption that the pound will decline to around DM2.60 by 2003, the institute's possible date for UK entry into the single currency. The pound closed at DM2.971.

Perpetual 'speechless' at Biotech response

BY PAUL DURMAN

THE chief investment officer of Perpetual, which is considering seeking board changes at British Biotech, was yesterday left "speechless" by the inadequacy of the drug development company's latest response to the numerous allegations it faces of misleading the stock market.

Bob Yerbury was commenting on a statement from John Raisman, British Biotech's chairman, which attacked "this media campaign" against the company but did nothing to address the substantive issues of persistent optimism about its drugs.

Mr Yerbury said: "They've got to recognise the urgency here, that they've got to re-

spond. Events are moving very fast. It's becoming more and more imperative that the company responds."

Mr Raisman repeated British Biotech's assurance that it would issue a "full circular" addressing the allegations raised by Andy Millar, sacked last week as director of clinical research. Mr Raisman said Dr Millar's statements were "ill-informed and irresponsible".

Dr Millar was dismissed after sharing his concerns with Perpetual, a 9.4 per cent shareholder. Mr Yerbury does not believe that either Dr Millar did anything wrong. Meanwhile, other shareholders contacted Perpetual to

replace Keith McCullagh, chief executive, if that is what the fund manager decides to do over the next couple of days. It seems likely that Perpetual already has the 10 per cent support it needs to call an extraordinary shareholder meeting.

Separately, *The Times* attended a hearing in the High Court to discuss an injunction application that has prevented the paper from disclosing the details of the Cameron McKenna report, which British Biotech partly relies upon to justify Dr Millar's sacking. It is understood that an increasing number of copies of the report are now in circulation.

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INSTITUTE OF DIRECTORS CONFERENCE
Young attacks Government over its 'policy of Eurocreep'

By ALASDAIR MURRAY AND CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

THE THINGS THEY SAID

Not everything has gone smoothly. We can't paper over all the cracks — however expensive the paper.

Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, on Labour's first year in office, with a possible reference to Lord Young of Laing, the Lord Chancellor, and his taste in interior design.

A euro that includes Italy, includes the borrowings of Belgium, includes the social economics of France, includes even the hopes of Greece, cannot be a strong euro.

Lord Young of Graffham, a former Minister without Portfolio and now president of the IOD.

It's nice for a Conservative to have such a large audience for a change. It's rather like the House of Commons in here. A lot of people in front of you but nothing much behind.

Archie Norman, chairman of Asda and vice-chairman of the Conservative Party.

All the ideas were shot live. If you don't believe me just watch my performance which is a couple of tins of Kiwi short of polish.

Tim Melville-Ross, Director-General of the IOD, introducing a recording of members' views.

Take the case of migraine. It is not a life-threatening condition. But for those who suffer, it is a blight on their lives. I know because I am a migraine sufferer myself.

Sir Richard Sykes, chairman of Glaxo Wellcome, who may have suffered from a headache since merger talks with SmithKline Beecham fell through.

Ruthless is not a nice word. Passionate about competition is a nicer way to put it.

Julian Richer, chairman of Richer Sounds, on whether it is necessary to be ruthless to succeed in business.

I have to answer to the City which is why I have a shorter haircut than Julian.

Nicola Foulston, chief executive of Brands Hatch Leisure, compares her approach with Julian Richer's.

LORD YOUNG of Graffham yesterday launched a stinging attack on the Government's EMU policies, claiming that it appeared intent on joining the single currency without fulfilling its commitment to conducting a proper debate.

The clash came as some delegates reacted angrily to the assertion made by Peter Mandelson in his speech to the conference that "on none of the big issues have our critics found much on which to condemn us".

The IOD responded that on policies such as trade union recognition and the European social chapter, business remains greatly at odds with the Government.

Lord Young, president of the Institute of Directors, warned delegates at its annual conference in London that the Government appeared to be pursuing a policy of "Eurocreep" and is preparing to sign up without having fulfilled any of the Chancellor's five tests for membership or holding a referendum.

"The really worrying thing is that the Government is beginning to say that the decision has been made," Lord Young said.

Lord Young, who served as a minister in the last Government, said that he believed the single currency project would "end in tears" and that Britain faced the prospect of a return to an era of trade union strife and high unemployment if it joined EMU.

Lord Young's comments came after Mr Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, had told the conference that the Government remained

committed to a "constructive engagement" with Europe.

Mr Mandelson insisted that the Government would continue "working for a reformed Europe". He added that whether the country was "in or out of the single currency", it would push for more flexible labour markets to ensure that Europe could cope with the "inevitable strains and stresses of economic and monetary union".

The Government also came under fire from some delegates for its handling of the strong pound. Mr Mandelson said that the Government understood the "hard and difficult" time that many businesses were facing but that "it is the price worth paying for long-term stability".

Archie Norman, chairman of Asda and Conservative MP for Tunbridge Wells, insisted that the Government could have taken action by increasing personal taxation last year to head off the damage being wreaked by the strong pound.

"British businesses are suffering more due to the escalation of the pound than any other single event," Mr Norman said. "Their big mistake was that failure to dampen consumer expenditure leaving us facing the prospect of recession."

However, Tim Melville-Ross, director-general of the IOD, backed the Treasury's handling of the problem. "The proposition that the Government should do something to get the pound down is deeply flawed," he said. "Businesses should be increasing investment to improve productivity."

Free nights down the pub fosters staff relations

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

WORKERS at the Carphone Warehouse enjoy free drinks at their local pubs once a month while the company puts a tab behind the bar and picks up the bill.

Free beer on the Friday before pay day is Carphone Warehouse's way of forging industrial relations, Charles Dunstone, the company's managing director, told the Institute of Directors.

The perk, which costs the company about £4,000 a night, is called Beer Bus and aims to "get people together out of the office as well as in work," he said.

Mr Dunstone said the 33-year-old founder of the mobile phone retailing company, which last year made a profit of £7 million. He said the beer night carried on a tradition which he had begun when the business was launched in 1989. Then, he would stand the other directors drinks in a bar in Marylebone Road,

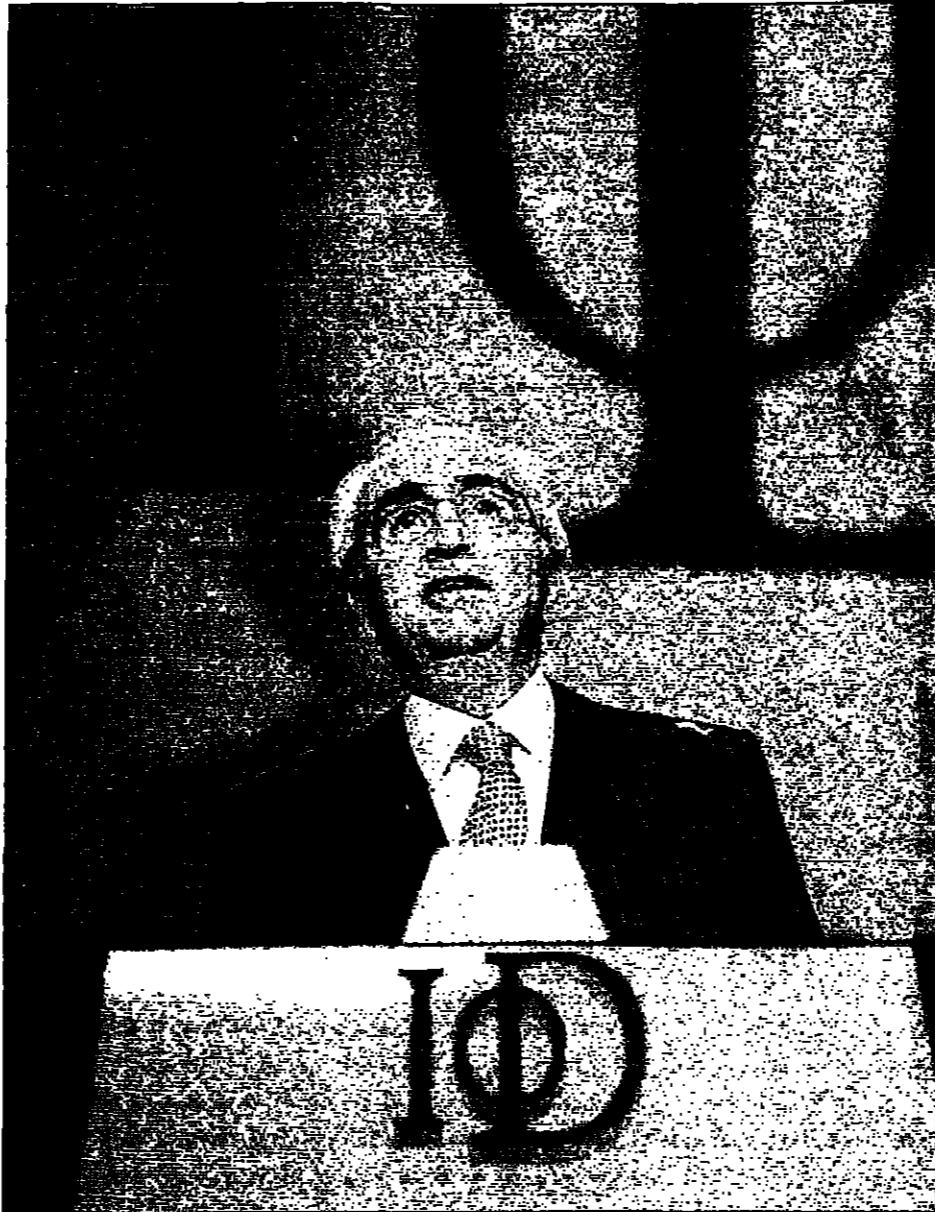
in Central London. He told delegates he was convinced that the nights out motivated his staff.

The get-togethers are not backed up by more official dealings with the workforce however, as the company does not recognise trade unions. Mr Dunstone said that no-one had ever asked for union recognition.

He said about half the 1,000 employees regularly join in on the free-drinks nights. They can drink as much as they like for one and a half hours.

Mr Dunstone said that the evenings had started many romances. "Many of our staff are single so it is inevitable that people get together."

Staff are encouraged to pick a pub they like for the Beer Buses and Mr Dunstone said he goes to his local evening out in London. The company also attempts another type of bonding: days out. Last year it hired the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst.



Lord Young said the Government seemed intent on joining EMU without proper debate



Norman: committed

Asda workers in line for summer share bonanza

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

ABOUT 26,000 employees at Asda are to be given £23 million of shares in the supermarket group this summer as part of the biggest employee share-owning plans even seen in the UK.

Archie Norman, the group's chairman and Conservative MP for Tunbridge Wells, Kent, told the Institute of Directors' annual conference that the shares would start going out to workers in July.

He said the shares were "a true reward for true service". In total, 46,000 workers at Asda will gain shares from the company's Colleague Share Ownership Plan, which was started three years ago, with the first 26,000 starting this July. More tranches will be awarded each July.

Staff will be looking at immediate profits gains of several hundred pounds because the option price was set at 90p. With yesterday's share price at 197½p, up 3½p yesterday, each employee will

gain more than £800. Options go to employees who have a year's service and work more than 15 hours a week.

Mr Norman said the company was committed to giving options to all staff rather than just executives. Asda fought a battle to get tax relief on options for lower-income employees amid the controversy over generous packages for highly paid directors. He said the share options were "a form of workplace equality — not in the sense of pay, but in that everyone in the company is equally valued, their contribution respected".

But the Asda chairman also gave warning about union recognition, arguing that it was an unwelcome restriction on business. He said society had shifted to reject collective institutions such as unions. "We have today the natural consequence of Thatcherism. It is individual power which from time to time finds expression in a confluence of public opinion."

Rhodia set for summer flotation

By CARL MORTISHED

RHÔNE-POULENC intends to float Rhodia, its speciality chemicals subsidiary, before the end of June.

The French pharmaceutical and chemicals group yesterday revealed a 30 per cent rise in first quarter net income to Fr 573 million (£87 million) after a 30 per cent gain in operating earnings from its pharma businesses and a 41 per cent increase at Rhodia.

Rhône-Poulenc plans to sell off 30 per cent of Rhodia, which makes fibres, food additives and pharmaceutical intermediates.

Jean-René Fourtout, chairman of Rhône-Poulenc, said the programme to improve profitability was well underway with benefits from Rhodia's productivity efforts beginning to show. The group's aim is to achieve a return on equity of 15 per cent in 2000 compared with 10.9 per cent last year.

Sales growth at the group's pharmaceutical businesses was 11.3 per cent. Rhône-Poulenc aims to raise the return on capital from the drugs business to 12 per cent in 2000 by boosting operating margins from 15 per cent to 18 per cent. A cost-cutting programme aims to reduce overhead by Fr1.5 billion by the turn of the century.

Rail hotels could be returning

By FRASER NELSON

RAILTRACK is considering selling land around its 2,500 stations to developers keen to set up a new generation of low-cost railway hotels.

Dick Cheney, its newly-appointed property director, has received applications from companies interested in plugging the gap in Britain's budget hotel market.

Travelinn, a Whitbread company which runs 181 289-a-night hotels across Britain, said it would be interested in buying land if it was near a Whitbread restaurant.

Guy Parsons, Travelinn marketing director, said: "We opened a hotel near Euston in February and it was fully booked on day two. People want to stay near stations."

Railtrack has also held preliminary talks with David Wells, a retired hotelier who has taken out a "Railodge" trademark in the hope of copying the success of Travelinn.

Mr Wells, 58, says he has had talks with Sir Robert McAlpine, the construction company, and plans to open 100 budget hotels in ten years at a cost of £1.4 million each.

Budget hotels make up 2 per cent of the UK market, against 10 per cent in France and up to 15 per cent in the US.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Losses at subsidiary fail to halt Hiscox

HISCOX, one of the largest corporate names in the Lloyds insurance market, managed to increase annual pre-tax profits in spite of suffering substantial losses at a subsidiary. The Hiscox Insurance Company, the troublesome subsidiary, lost £4.2 million in the year. The losses restricted overall profits growth to 7 per cent in the year to 31 December. Hiscox made £15.4 million (£14.3 million). Earnings per share fell back from 11.6p to 8.2p, however, because more shares were issued at the time Hiscox graduated from the Alternative Investment Market to the full list in July. The final dividend is 2.2p, making 3.3p (3p).

Robert Hiscox, chairman, blamed the poor performance at HIC on continuing costs incurred on business undertaken before Hiscox owned the firm. Mr Hiscox also expressed confidence that the problems at the loss-making subsidiary were close to resolution. Hiscox has recruited a new chief for the business and is expanding into new areas of operation. "We have now placed Hiscox Insurance Company on a firm footing," he said. "We have had exceptional results from our managed syndicates at Lloyds." Hiscox underwrites risk and also acts as a managing agent. Underwriting made profits of £14.5 million and the managing agency made £5.1 million. As a corporate name, Hiscox is increasing the amount of capital it provides for its syndicates. This year it will provide 25 per cent. Tempus, page 32

Bank home loans rise

HOMEOWNERS switching their loans to reduce repayments are boosting mortgage lending at the banks. During March, some £5 billion-worth of loans were approved, a rise of 27 per cent on February. The British Bankers Association reports that about a quarter of these loans were remortgages. The bank mortgage approval statistics follow figures for building societies which showed an increase. Rising approval figures are seen as an optimistic sign for the property market. The banking sector now includes 15 of the largest mortgage lenders in the UK, including Halifax and Lloyds-TSB.

House prices edge up

HOUSE prices across the country rose 2.8 per cent on average in the first quarter of 1998, giving a year-on-year increase of 12.7 per cent, the Nationwide Building Society said yesterday. Last month saw a 0.3 per cent rise, an annual increase of 12 per cent. Paul Sanderson, head of research at the Nationwide, said that the number of properties changing hands "remained at stubbornly low levels". Remortgaging accounted for at least 20 per cent of new lending, said Dr Sanderson. London saw a slackening in prices in the first quarter, recording an average rise of 15 per cent compared with 23 per cent six months ago.

Shell extends card

SHELL is extending its loyalty card scheme, which uses smart card technology, to include a range of retailers and holiday companies. Holders of SMART cards will now be able to pick up points at Shell, Vision Express, Hilton, John Menzies and Commercial Union, and to spend them at any of those outlets, in addition to Next, Dixons, PC World and others. Shell pioneered the use of "smart" loyalty cards, which have a microchip buried inside to store information. Books has followed, using the technology for its Advantage card.

James Crean tumbles

JAMES CREAM, the troubled industrial holding company, warned that its core food division is still in decline as it returned its sharpest-ever fall in annual profits. The company said that food, which generates almost half its business, saw turnover drop by 7 per cent in the last three months. However, it said sales are up by 16 per cent in its print division and by 28 per cent in its electrical division. Heavy disposals last year took pre-tax profits down by 31 per cent, to £12.3 million (£10.4 million) on sales off 9 per cent at £227 million (£191 million).

Euro cheques at Cook

FURTHER evidence of Eurocreep, the phenomenon whereby the euro becomes part of lives although we may have rejected Economic and Monetary Union membership, came with the announcement that Thomas Cook would be offering euro travellers cheques next year to coincide with the introduction of the euro on January 1 1999. They will be accepted in the 11 member countries that will join EMU. At present Thomas Cook does not provide travellers cheques, for seven of them, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal.

Panoz joins Medisys

DONALD PANOZ, an American entrepreneur who built the Elan Corporation into a \$6.5 billion (£3.93 billion) healthcare giant, has joined the board of Medisys, a £55 million AIM-listed medical research company. Medisys agreed yesterday to pay £7.4 million for Lukens Medical Corporation, a NASDAQ-listed company whose products help to seal body wounds, and said it will soon demerge BioCure, a drug development subsidiary. Medisys returned pre-tax loss of £977,000 (£21,000) on sales of £2 million (£2.19 million). Its shares added 3½p to 33p. Tempus, page 32

One 2 One launch

ONE 2 ONE, the mobile telephone company, yesterday announced its big drive to appeal to business users with technology and new calls packages. The company said that its new Precept service would be able to deliver speech quality comparable to that of a fixed line. A new daytime service will offer free local daytime calls. In addition, the cost of international telephone calls will drop and One 2 One will give its customers a new telephone every two years, a priority line for urgent incoming calls and a "07" number for life.

Columbia/HCA sickly

COLUMBIA/HCA Healthcare, the world's largest healthcare company, suffered a 53 per cent fall in first-quarter profits as it embarked on a massive restructuring. Quarterly net income fell to \$197 million (£19.4 million) from \$4.0 billion. In addition to the restructuring, there were losses from discontinued businesses and costs related to a federal investigation of its Medicare billing practices. Columbia/HCA said it will now demerge two hospital groups instead of the three it had planned.

TOURIST RATES

Table with columns for Bank Buy/Sell, Bank Buy/Sell, and Bank Buy/Sell. Lists exchange rates for various countries like Australia, Austria, Belgium, etc.

Vertical advertisements on the right side of the page, including 'Midsh under as RBS grind to', 'Grampian to open 100 outlets', and 'Tourist Rates'.

Not a good deal — exclusive



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

The owners of Vickers have reason to feel confused. Yesterday their chairman blithely informed them that he is definitely selling Rolls-Royce Motors to BMW. Yet Volkswagen has made it very clear that it is prepared to outbid BMW, perhaps by as much as 50 per cent.

There may be some Vickers shareholders who feel pangs of doubt over the issue of whether they should part with the famous motor marque, and some patriotic, or xenophobic, souls who find it particularly painful to contemplate the business being sold to an overseas company. But on one point they most probably agree: if they are to give up ownership of Rolls-Royce Motors, it should be for the highest possible price.

Why is this obvious commercial logic not to prevail? At yesterday's annual meeting, the Vickers chairman, Sir Colin Chandler, stuck doggedly to his prepared script, insisting that there is only one bid on the table and that is BMW's £340 million offer. This is literally correct but reflects not a lack of seriousness on VW's part but the prevailing exclusivity agreement that Vickers has with BMW.

Such agreements can be a disservice to business owners, as the members of the Birmingham Midshires Building Society have come to realise. Their executives committed Midshires to an exclusivity arrangement with

Royal Bank of Scotland but along came Halifax, dangling the prospect of substantially more cash. The Midshires management has not had the gall to proceed with the RBS deal but has hardly raced to find a way through to make its more attractive offer to Midshires members. At least the Midshires' refusal to proceed with the previously agreed, meagrely priced, RBS deal does hold out the prospect of members being able to enjoy a juicier windfall once the exclusivity agreement expires or is curtailed. The determination of Chandler to press ahead with the Rolls-Royce sale threatens to short-change permanently shareholders.

Angry Volkswagen is threatening to try to put its case direct to shareholders, in an effort to influence the outcome of the extraordinary meeting needed to vote through the BMW deal. This option is not available to Halifax, the law being so protective of building societies' innocent customers that it insists the poor things should not be subjected to the arduous task of weighing up the merits of two bids for their business. Sir Colin will have to explain

his reasoning. Is his urge to sell to BMW influenced by Rolls-Royce plc, which claims right of veto over who should own the RR marque and has a strong preference for BMW, with whom it happens to have joint ventures? If so, Vickers shareholders should demand that the company pursues its legal action to try to have that power of veto outlawed. That may take time but the value of Rolls-Royce is unlikely to evaporate.

Wanted — crusader against the euro

The annual conference of the Institute of Directors always promises a dose of good knock about fun. This was the venue for Gerald Ratner's infamously honest speech on the quality of the goods he sold in his jewellery business. Sadly, Peter Mandelson decided against the same tactics when he took to the

IoD stage yesterday. No misplaced honesty from the Minister without Portfolio, although the more vociferous IoD members were quick to let him know that his verdict on the Government's first year in office did not tally completely with their own.

The IoD campaigned against the introduction of a minimum wage, shudders at the prospect of a right to union recognition and was not enamoured of the principles behind a windfall tax. But the institute's opposition to all these things pales by comparison to its President's determination to fight against the euro. Lord Young of Graffham, the former Tory cabinet minister, pointed out that in every other area the Government seems wedded to the idea of taking power closer to the people: a mayor for London; creeping independence for Scotland, and assembly for Wales. "Then why centralise our economies in Frankfurt and Strasbourg?" The

conference's loud agreement with his sentiments was unlikely to dissuade Mr Mandelson and his colleagues from their determined pursuit of the single currency. In their eyes, Lord Young is tarnished by his political past. Most of the other business voices that speak out against Britain joining the euro are similarly dismissed as having views coloured by Conservative Party affiliation rather than commercial sense. Sir Stanley Kalms of Dixons, Sir Rocco Forte of that ilk and Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, the GUS chairman, may be prepared to put up the fight but they are not going to sway government thinking or the views of the nation.

Aware of their problem, the anti-euro faction has been searching for a less obviously partisan character to lead their campaign. It now seems clear that Lord Marsh will take up the cause. As a former Labour MP,

he is thought to have the right political credentials. But he is from the wrong generation. If the anti-euro campaigners are to make their case effectively rather than risk being branded as dinosaurs, they need to find a leader in his or her prime. Could somebody suitable please come forward before Lord Archer volunteers his services?

Scardino on the champagne trail

Marjorie Scardino was the clear favourite to collect the title of Business Woman of the Year. She is, after all, the first female chief executive of a FTSE 100 company, an achievement of which the widow Crompton would surely approve. But after more than a year as chief executive of Pearson, she has lost her novelty value as far as the City is concerned and she is being judged on results rather than gender.

The reviews so far would indicate that Ms Scardino may even be able to lay claim to a second crate of the widow's champagne in next year's round of the competition. Pearson shares, down to 664p last sum-

mer, have bounded upwards. With the significant help of chairman Sir Dennis Stevenson, she has achieved enormous change at Pearson. A series of disposals, most recently Future Publishing, have reshaped and reinvigorated the organisation. Money is being spent in those areas where she intends Pearson to be a major player: newspapers, information and education; television, where, despite the soothsayers' warnings, Greg Dyke is still energetically at the helm, and book publishing. Her refusal to detail a blueprint for how the company will develop has left her sensibly free to be a touch opportunistic.

If she can emerge victorious from the auction for Simon & Schuster, without dangerously overpaying, then she and her shareholders will have cause to reach for another glass of champagne.

Touch of froth

The price that Starbucks is paying for its enterprising British look-alike is as frothy as a cappuccino. It will almost certainly have caught the attention of those bright young chaps who are in the process of reversing their infant chain of coffee shops into the still suspended Larica Trust. Andrew Regan, the man who dreamt of taking over the Co-op, may feel inspired to buy himself an Espresso machine and brew up a fortune.

Midshires under fire as RBS talks grind to halt

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

BIRMINGHAM Midshires Building Society came under attack from members and Halifax bank yesterday over its stalled talks with the Royal Bank of Scotland.

The society is seeking to escape from an exclusivity clause which it signed last August when RBS offered to buy Birmingham Midshires for £630 million. This prevents it from talking to Halifax, which last month trumped RBS with an offer of £780 million. This would net the society's 1.1 million members a potential windfall of £750, at least £150 more than under the RBS offer.

John Leighfield, chairman,

said the society had offered to pay compensation to RBS three weeks ago to escape the agreement. It is believed to have offered between £5 million and £10 million. Despite frantic negotiations, the society has received no final response from RBS.

While still bound by the agreement, Mr Leighfield said the society would review all the options open to it. "The board will consider any proposals it receives from third parties. It will also begin discussions with Halifax alongside the society's other strategic options including floating on the Stock Exchange."

Mr Leighfield apologised to a turbulent annual general meeting for the frustration caused by the deadlock.

However, he defended the use of the exclusivity clause, which does not expire until the end of the year. Lengthy exclusivity periods were a "fact of life and had been a feature of three previous acquisitions of building societies by banks."

Mr Leighfield and the board faced a barrage of criticism from 600 members concerned at the uncertainty over the society's future and its abandonment of mutualism.

Julian Allen, a member, said: "If you convert shareholders will expect a great return, that all has to come from a worse deal for mortgages and savings accounts."

Mike Jackson, chief executive, said: "There has been a sea change in the direction in which mutualism was being considered. We cannot be Luddites in this process, keep our feet in the sand and watch the water washing over us."

Dick Spelman, director of distribution at Halifax, said: "We are very disappointed that after seven weeks we are no further forward. Writing the occasional letter to RBS is not good enough. We, the staff of Birmingham Midshires and its savers are all in limbo. Their statement on strategy seems only to add to the confusion."

A spokeswoman for RBS said the situation remained unchanged. The exclusivity agreement binding Birmingham Midshires to the takeover had not been severed and no decision had been made on the amount of compensation to be paid by the society for the breaking off of the deal.



John Padfield, chief executive of Chirosience, and Christine Soden, finance director, are pictured with barrels of Chirosience, the long-acting local anaesthetic for which the company yesterday applied for US marketing approval. The company's proprietary ChiroTech arm, which is under review and may be sold, has won a £25 million contract to make a chemical that is used in a new anti-HIV drug being developed by Glaxo Wellcome. Tempus, page 33

RAC delays annual meeting

By JASON NISSE

THE Royal Automobile Club is to put back its planned annual meeting, which had been provisionally scheduled for May 20, while it considers a number of offers made for its motoring side.

Cendant, the US group which this week completed the purchase of NPC Corporation, owner of the Green Flag motoring rescue business, is understood to have put in an offer of £450 million. Other bidders are

believed to include Lex Service, the motors group, and General Accident, the insurance company.

The RAC said yesterday that it would not at least another week to evaluate all the offers and bring forward proposals to its 12,000 members, who are in line for windfalls of around £40,000 each from the sale of the motoring services business.

David Worslett, the RAC's external affairs director, said that offers of at least £450

million had been tabled. The delay in calling the meeting means that a challenge to the board from Jeffrey Rose, who was ousted earlier this month as chairman, may be ready before the RAC board can bring forward its own proposals.

Last Friday Mr Rose, who was dismissed for writing letters to members proposing the demerger of the motoring side, submitted 10 nominations for new board members. The names included Sir Eric

Parker, the former chairman of Trafalgar House, and Philip Sober, a former senior partner of Stoy Hayward, the accountants.

Because of the unusual structure of the RAC, the motion to call an extraordinary meeting to put the motion to remove the existing board and appoint the new team, cannot be put until the nominations are in.

Mr Rose expects to be able to call an extraordinary meeting some time in June.

UK operations lift Air London

By KATHY LIPARI



David Savile, managing director, left, and Tony Mack

AIR London International, the air charter broker, yesterday delivered a 21 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £1.35 million in the six months to January 31 after a strong performance from its UK operations.

Tony Mack, executive chairman, said the UK division produced double-digit growth and sales increased 135 per cent at Air Partner International SARL, the company's French business. Air Partner International GmbH, the group's German subsidiary, broke even. Overall turnover jumped 20

per cent to £21.4 million and fully diluted earnings per share increased to 8.8p from 7.4p. The interim dividend is lifted 20 per cent to 3p a share. Mr Mack said sales since the end of January had been "encouraging". However, he added: "We do not know whether or not this will continue into the last quarter."

The company plans to continue its geographic expansion throughout the world, opening another one or two offices in the US and in Europe in the medium term. Air London shares fell 5p to 322½p yesterday.

Parry offered chance to lead Decaux merger

By CHRIS AYRES

DECAUX, the privately owned French advertiser locked in a bitter £475 million bid, battle for More Group, yesterday offered Roger Parry, the UK company's chief executive, the chance to oversee a £2 billion flotation of the merged group.

The offer shocked City analysts, mainly because of the size of Decaux's valuation of the combined company. It also comes after an increasingly personal war of words between Jean-Francois Decaux, chairman of the French group, and Mr Parry. It reached a climax last week with Mr Decaux threatening to withdraw his job offer to Mr Parry.

The Decaux camp has accused Mr Parry of favouring a rival £466 million bid from Clear Channel of the US, and is currently suing More in France over its business methods. The Decaux bid is still awaiting clearance from the Office of Fair Trading, and Mr Parry has made it clear that he thinks the deal could be blocked by the regulators.

M Decaux said yesterday: "For the time being the offer to Mr Parry is still on the table. He's doing very well for More Group. It is necessary for us to

have a new management structure. Someone like Mr Parry could be very beneficial for us. I can forgive some of his comments."

He added that Mr Parry's reaction to his bid had been partly because he had not expected it. Decaux says it would be valued in London at about £1.4 billion. This figure comes from its gross earnings of £140 million, trading on a multiple of ten — quite low for the media sector in the UK. The company estimates the future market value of More at about £500 million.

However, analysts were sceptical about the valuation. One said: "With Decaux being a 'private' company, and a French one, at that, no one really knows anything about it. The valuation of £2 billion sounds like a very big number." M Decaux said his company needed to float to fund its global ambitions. He went on to say that he was confident that the OFT would pass Decaux's bid for More. According to Decaux, after the deal it would only have a near-monopoly in the bus shelter market — a small part of the overall outdoor advertising market.

Profits hit at Jerome Group

By JASON NISSE

JEROME GROUP, the struggling Yorkshire textile and engineering company, paid Stephen Jerome, the group's former managing director and cousin of the chairman and chief executive, Alan Jerome, £297,000 in compensation for loss of office last year.

Stephen Jerome resigned as managing director last October, after 31 years at the company, to be replaced by John Taylor, the first non-member of the Jerome family to hold that office. Mr Jerome's payoff was more than twice his annual salary, which totalled £115,000 in his final year in office.

Alan Jerome has said that he will give up the post of chief executive shortly, although he will stay on as chairman. The Jerome family has been gradually reducing its influence over the company.

Restructuring costs meant that the group saw pre-tax profits nearly halve to £566,000 in 1997. In his chairman's statement, Alan Jerome said trading remains difficult.

Warnings send Reed down again

By RAYMOND SNOODY

SHARES of Reed International fell by a further 12p yesterday to 545p following renewed warnings of short-term factors expected to affect results of the international information group.

Nigel Stapleton, co-chairman of Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch group, told yesterday's annual meeting that the sale of IPC Magazines, the cost of the "initiatives we are taking to give the travel business a secure future" and increased investment in electronic publishing would all have their impact.

"This increase in investment, and stronger sterling, will particularly impact unfavourably on the first half in comparison with 1997."

He added that the announcement that the company was spending \$1.65 billion (£1 billion) on the legal publisher Matthew Bender and the remaining 50 per cent of Shephard's, the legal citation service it did not already own, "will be enhancing to shareholder value."

Advertisement for a personal savings service. Text: "Direct a special rate for your personal savings. Why not for your business?" Includes a phone number: 0345 55 56 59. Logo: "Savings that never sleep".

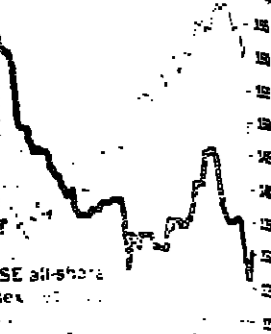
هكذا من الأصل

Trust

ing deal with Zenera... 15 million of share...

time to come from the... aggressive store opening...

AT MILL



WALL STREET

Asian challenge for Gordon Brown

What a ghastly moment for social climbers, when it dawns that hardly any of the important people have come to their party...

are scarcely an urgent issue for their trade with America or anywhere else. Korean imports are 36 per cent down, year-on-year...



GRAHAM SPARLEANT

nese president, argued that the domino currency collapse represented a new kind of economic crisis that is liable to recur...

LeBow turns his back on fellow tobacco giants to save his empire

Oliver August reports on a corporate raider's strategy for survival

Depending on you ask, Bennett LeBow is a hero or a fool. Anti-tobacco campaigners say he has made a brave choice that could save his business empire...



Bennett LeBow is co-operating with the Justice Department to prove criminal charges against his mighty rivals

Anthony Sampson's Organisation Man, a volatile one-man band. But a successful one until he decided upon running his own tobacco company...

Big Tobacco scheming. He had more to lose than anyone else if Washington decided to hold the firms accountable for the health problems created by smoking...

staying away from the bankruptcy courts and to help him make acquisitions, LeBow bought his own investment bank in 1995, Ladenburg Thalmann, a 250-employee Wall Street house...

With the Justice Department pact, he has now entered the end game of his fight to save his cigarette company, his bank and his salary...

Catching unwary consumers in a Web of deceit is name of the game

The key to putting off any scam is confidence. Your victims must believe you are genuine, right up until the second they hand you their cash...

selling financial services. He has hired three software experts to produce a program that will give Internet users immediate access to a secure database of regulated financial services providers...



unregulated the Internet is for consumers and companies. Meanwhile, Mr Green has probably shot himself in the foot by performing such a publicly humiliating stunt on Virgin...

Borrowed time

IT SOUNDS self-contradictory, but there you go. The latest Reuters survey of what larger companies think of the City shows the work being concentrated among a few firms...

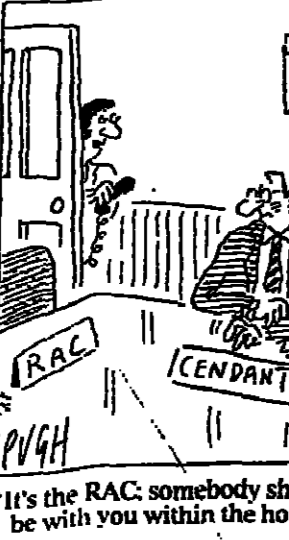
the survey, suggests that markets are still expanding, junior analysts are being taken on to relieve the pressure on seniors and more firms are setting up in London.

I cannot say I am entirely convinced by the arguments. If pressure on broking margins pushed the likes of BZW and NatWest out of the game, why are Commerzbank and Paribas, for example, building up their London operations?

And Norman may not be endorsing himself to some of his more old-fashioned Conservative colleagues by claiming that the revival of the party is not unlike the job he took on when he joined Asda in 1991...

book about it: the latest poll says 67 per cent of the people want it - you almost think they deserve it. (By contrast a survey of us Brits found that 81 per cent of us were unable to name the thing.)

But where is Jacques Delors, the man who spent a decade as president of the European Commission and has the best claim of anyone to be father of the euro?



It's the RAC, somebody should be with you within the hour

TALKING of the Reuters survey, it was noticeable how quickly the recipients at the awards ceremony recovered their composure, in the best tradition of Oscars night, once their names were read out and bounded up to collect their gongs from Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury...

Blank checks AFTER the \$146 billion merger of Citicorp and Travelers Group, some cynics suggested that the new bank would turn out to be a dinosaur, slow-moving and stupid. Proof has arrived, earlier than expected...

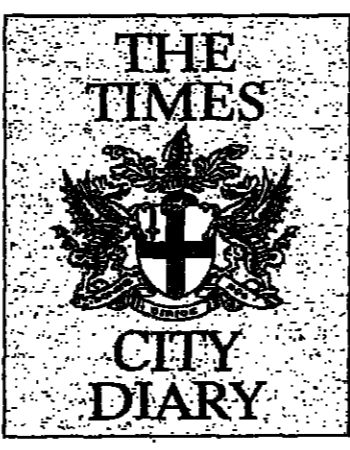
WELCOME break TO SPEND more time with my wife and family is usually the excuse given by male politicians for leaving political life, not joining it. But it was the reason given to the IoD by Archie Norman, MP for Tunbridge Wells and chairman of Asda...

Summit else FRANCE has gone predictably Euro-broncker on the eve of the special summit in Brussels that will give the common currency the formal go-ahead. The papers are full of nothing else: Yves Thibault de Silguy, the Euro-Commissioner, is writing a



Jacques Delors is missing out on the big euro party

Advertisement for 'Don't miss the float' with details about an offer and deadline for applications.



GM in talks over 35% stake in Daewoo cars

By CARI MORTISHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

DAEWOO and General Motors are in talks that could lead to GM taking an equity stake of up to 50 per cent in Daewoo Motor, the carmaking arm of the Korean conglomerate.

Kim Woo-Chong, the Daewoo chairman, said yesterday that talks with the US rival could conclude in June. He said that the most likely investment would be 35 per cent but it could be as high as 50 per cent.

The Korean group yesterday confirmed its 50 per cent investment in LDV, the truck and van company that emerged from the collapse of Daf, The Netherlands commercial vehicle group, five years ago. The joint venture between LDV and Daewoo will involve an investment of £160 million and will create 2,000 jobs in Birmingham.

Mr Kim said that the GM talks would lead to a wide-ranging collaboration in manufacturing, distribution and research and development. He said that cost reductions of 20 per cent had been identified in developing markets: "We will see big economies of scale for things like research and development."

General Motors yesterday confirmed that talks were in progress but said that no agreement had yet been reached. The American company would not comment on any investment level.

GM is believed to be keen to expand its market share in developing countries, an area targeted by Daewoo. The Korean carmaker has been pouring money into manufacturing plants from Poland to the Ukraine, as well as Uzbekistan, Egypt, Iran, and Far Eastern countries, including India, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Daewoo is in need of funds to continue its huge investment in capacity, but debt levels are already high. The carmaker's strategic goal is to raise capacity from a current level of 1.5 million units worldwide to 2.5 million units by the turn of the century. A spokesman for Daewoo said that its plans called for investment of some \$15 billion between 1995 and 2000.

With domestic demand in Korea crumbling, Daewoo needs profitable markets overseas and cash to continue its investment in developing countries.

Daewoo had a 20-year collaboration with General Motors until it was dissolved in 1992 but the companies have been in talks about renewing ties since 1996.

BT agrees to adverts in kiosks

By RAYMOND SNODDY

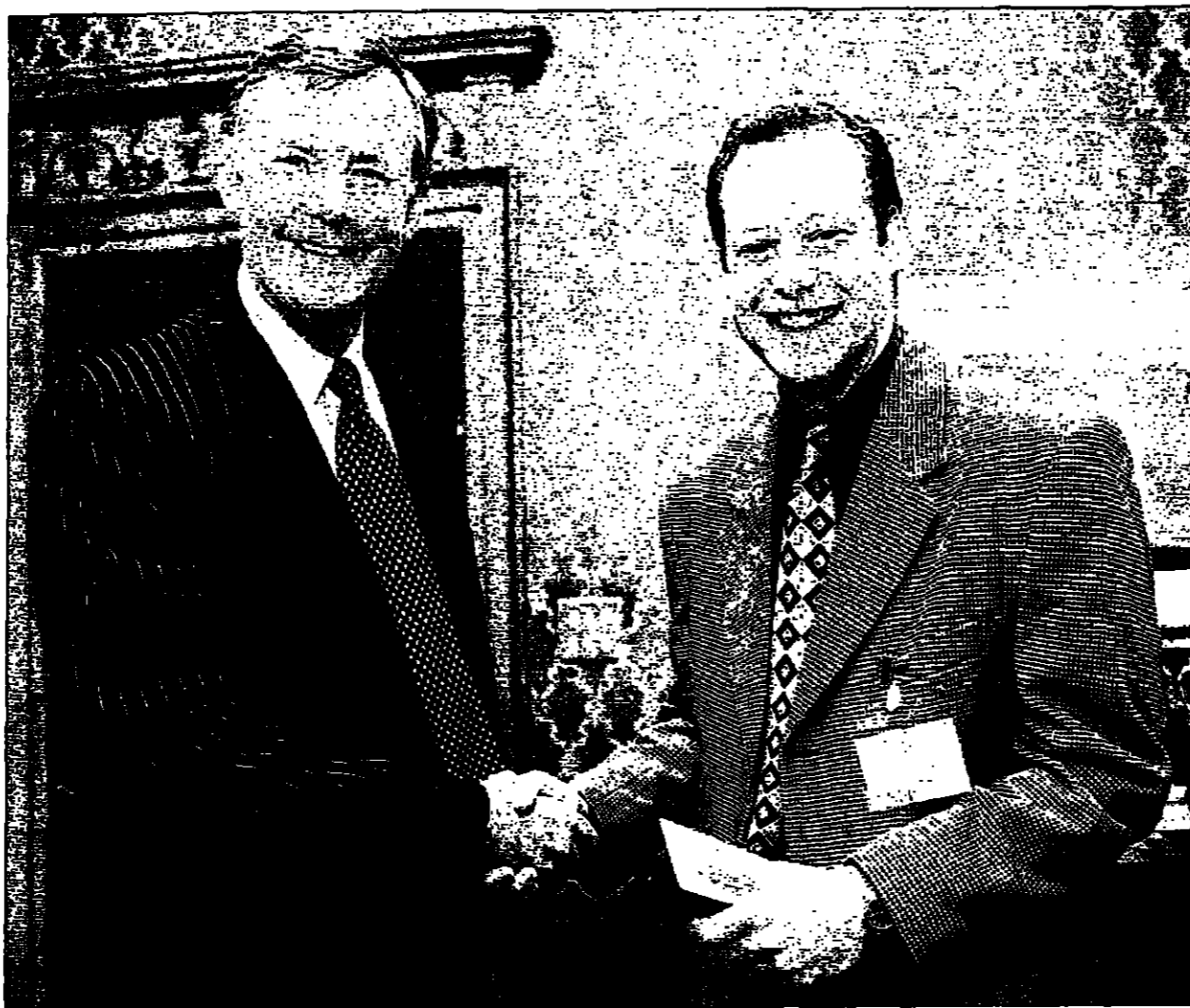
BT IS bowing to the inevitable and allowing advertising in public telephone boxes.

The company is to sell advertising in 50,000 kiosks nationwide. A pilot scheme in the Meridian TV area featuring advertising for Tango, the soft drink, launches next month.

The new nationwide advertising medium, or Phonesties, as it will officially be known, will be available to advertisers either nationally or regionally. BT is also offering illuminated displays, which will be branded as Phonelights.

Steve Davis, head of marketing at BT Payphones, said: "More than two million people visit a BT payphone every day. Results from past BT promotional activity have shown that advertising in kiosks really works." He added that kiosk advertising was particularly successful in reaching the youth market. More than 62 per cent of 16 to 19-year-olds use BT payphones each week.

Student wins Times/NatWest prize



Daniel Peters, right, a 20-year-old undergraduate at Edinburgh University, is this year's winner of the Business Ethics Competition run by NatWest and The Times. The contest aims to encourage students to address the ethical dilemmas

business faces; contestants were asked to decide how Biggins International should react when its operations in a developing country had to contend with the aftermath of a military coup, including the arrest of an employee. Derek Wanless,

chief executive of NatWest, is pictured presenting Daniel with a £3,000 cheque for his considered response to the problem. Second prize went to Simon Huntington, from Southampton University, and third was Daniel Sheridan of Cambridge.

National Power in Malaysian deal

By MARTIN BARROW

NATIONAL POWER is to invest up to \$125 million (about £75 million) in Malakoff, a Malaysian power company, it was announced yesterday. As part of the agreement the UK company will participate in future Malaysian energy projects and the two companies will co-operate in other projects in the Asia Pacific region.

National Power is to acquire shares in Malakoff from Malaysian Resources Corporation and will eventually hold about 15 per cent of the enlarged share capital after the acquisition of Teknik Janakuaasa (TJSB), a power plant operations and maintenance company.

Malakoff has interests in about 1,800 megawatts of power plant in Malaysia.

The equity investment will take National Power's interests in overseas assets to more than 10,000 Mw of generating capacity. The company has about 17,000 Mw in the UK.

The company has already invested £1.2 billion overseas. In the current year its international earnings will be about £130 million, up from £74 million last year. Growth in international earnings is projected at between 15 per cent and 20 per cent a year.

Intel may face US anti-trust charges

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

INTEL, the world's largest maker of microchips, may face the same anti-trust charges levelled against Microsoft.

The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is preparing a case against Intel over an alleged abuse of its dominant market position to force the hand of chip buyers. Intel is said to have told computer manufacturers to buy its lower-grade products if they wanted the high-performance Pentium chips. Some computer-makers complained also that Intel insisted they do not use chips from rivals.

Intel has an even more powerful grip on its market than Microsoft, the maker of the main operating system for personal computers. But, because it sells only to computer-makers it has kept a lower profile than Microsoft. Intel supplies the microprocessors used in 90 per cent of all personal computers.

In a move aimed at calming monopoly fears, Intel last week agreed to license some of its technology to other chip makers.

The company said: "We have never done anything illegal to achieve our success. We are co-operating with the FTC."

Hemingway tables agreed bid for Olives

HEMINGWAY PROPERTIES, the property company whose chairman is Stanislas Yassukovich, has made an agreed £28.6 million takeover bid for Olives Property, it was announced yesterday. Hemingway is offering nine new shares for every eight Olives shares, valuing each share at 42½p. There is a full cash alternative of 40p a share. Hemingway has secured acceptances in respect of 34 per cent of Olives's shares.

Hemingway has rationalised its Central London portfolio and completed the acquisition of 42 retail, office and industrial properties spread throughout England and Scotland. Yesterday the company reported a 30 per cent rise in net asset value to 57p a share in the year to December 31. Yesterday the shares fell 3p to 45¼p. Its pre-tax profits rose to £7.8 million from £6.5 million. In 1997 Olives lifted pre-tax profits to £1.4 million from £900,000.

London First chairman

LONDON FIRST CENTRE, the capital's inward investment agency, has appointed Sir Michael Pickard its new chairman. He is a board member and chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation. He succeeds Sir Colin Marshall, who is to become chairman of the new London Development Partnership, which will draw up the economic strategy for the proposed mayor of London. London First is a private and public sector partnership.

Full listing for RZH

RAPHAEL ZORN HELMSLEY, the corporate finance adviser, broker and investment manager, reported pre-tax profits of £1.33 million for the half-year to March 31, up from £1.2 million. But earnings fell to 6.1p a share from 8.4p, reflecting the increase in the number of shares. The company, which raised £135 million for the quoted Lloyd's vehicles in two years, is to switch from the Alternative Investment Market to a full listing. The shares rose 3p to 87½p.

S&N creates 1,300 jobs

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE, which earlier this week announced 300 job losses within its Scottish Courage beer division, is to create 1,300 jobs through a £21.5 million expansion of its Rat & Parrot café-bars. The number will increase from 43 to 70 within a year. All will be at least 4,000 sq ft although the first unit, which opens in Leeds tomorrow, will be 9,500 sq ft, which S&N Retail says, will be the largest bar in Britain.

Ryan Hotels flourish

RYAN HOTELS, which owns hotels in the Republic of Ireland and continental Europe, lifted pre-tax profits to £15.02 million (£4.36 million) from £14.04 million in the year to January 29. Earnings were 16.69p, up from 15.18p in the previous year. The total dividend is increased 20 per cent to 12.25p with a final of 11.56p. The company, which owns the Gresham hotel in Dublin, said trading in the first three months of this year was strongly ahead of 1997's first quarter.

VTR turns loss around

A TURNROUND at loss-making Portman Entertainment, has reaped rewards for VTR, the film and special effects group. Interim pre-tax profits for the group are £1 million, compared with a loss of £850,000 last year, on a turnover of £13.1 million, up 49 per cent. Earnings per share rose to 6.95p from 2.34p but the dividend is held at 1.75p a share. Gearing has been reduced to 95 per cent from 121 per cent. The shares fell 6p to 117½p yesterday.

ACCOUNTANCY

Hitches in store at one-stop shop

Victor McDougall sees risk in the idea of lawyer-and-accountant firms

A fully integrated multi-disciplinary firm, or MDP, including accountants and solicitors offering one-stop services is possibly an attractive concept, but has severe cultural problems. The two professional groups often need to work together independently, whether "in-house" or as external practitioners, but their functions are not interchangeable.

The range of accountants' activities is narrower than that of lawyers. Professionally, the accountant functions only where money, in the broadest sense, was, is, will be or ought to be present. No human activity is outwith the possible concern of a lawyer.

Within due legal limits, the lawyer is a partisan for his client, whether good, bad or indifferent. The comprehensiveness of the lawyer's involvement requires identification of a particular client (a company chairman?) to the exclusion of others with potentially conflicting interests (the chief executive, non-executive directors and the company) who should be appropriately separately represented. Secondly, there must be complete confidentiality — absolute privilege — for all normal communications between solicitor and client.

In contrast, the accountant's thinking is based on traditional ideas like "independence", "professional judgment", "objectivity", "materiality", "consistency", and "prudence". Such ideas are widely shared globally, though their practical application varies from country to country according to legal and cultural context. Thus, company accounts should show a "true and fair view" (UK), "fairly present" the position (US); be "sincere" (France), be "according to law" (Germany) and "give a clear insight" (The Netherlands).

These phrases do not produce identical practical results. Nevertheless, the accountant, with a personal belief in his/her own judgment evidenced by a personal or firm signature, must take each client's situation as it comes. So long as relevant national criteria are satisfied, the accountant need not worry much about conflicting interests among clients. Indeed, the accountant's function may well be to help to resolve such conflicts. To an accountant, "conflict of interest" primarily means any financial or personal relationship that might impair the accountant's objectivity and require withdrawal — as may also be necessary if a client rejects advice to disclose the truth of some situation.

To sum up: the lawyer risks personal disaster if he breaches a client's confidentiality; the accountant does so by letting malpractice go unreported. Solicitors and accountants each pay huge sums for negligence insurance and for the regulatory systems to which they are respectively subject. Any attempt at homogenisation would be enormously difficult, time-consuming, of dubious cost benefit, and against subsidiarity principles. Thus, in England and Wales — and in Scotland, but not necessarily elsewhere — ordinary practising solicitors handle much more client money than comparable accountants do. So, solicitors in each of these two jurisdictions are required to act as trustees — rather than bankers — relative to client money, and accountants play an important part in ensuring that solicitors' accounts are kept appropriately. Incidentally, English and Scottish solicitors have very different approaches to selling houses, but that is another subsidiary story.

Turning back to GB basics, suppose a small MDP, in which an accountant and a solicitor form an integrated MDP. Each will assume professional responsibilities for areas in which he is not qualified, and attendant financial and disciplinary responsibility.

What happens? Does the accountant access the solicitor's privileged mail? And if not, is he properly discharging duties owed to insurers and clients? If one partner is authorised to provide, say, financial services and the other is not... I fear the mind boggles.

The global providers of multi-talents of professional services doubtless have the resources to supply the Chinese walls and compartmentalised teams thought needed to service both Worldwide Widgets and Worldwide Squidgets and ensure confidentiality of their respective commercial secrets.

Nevertheless, it is understandable that, in many parts of the world, there are lawyers — and, as I know, accountants — who view the MDP concept with scepticism, both as to practicality and as to integrity.

The author of this personal view was an official of the Law Society (England and Wales) 1938-1951 and secretary of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland 1951-1976.



Victor McDougall says two professions' duties could clash

It's people who count and not their bodies

THE annual President's dinner of the English Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICA) took place in the great hall of its headquarters in Moorgate Place in the City last night. It was in the same hall just over a year ago that a rather different event took place: the launch of the Labour Party's business manifesto which helped the landslide election victory on its way.

To judge from the institute's annual report package, only the merest whiff of the winds of cultural change that have supposedly invigorated the country in the meantime has reached Moorgate Place.

That is not to say that there have been any no changes. For the first time, members are getting two documents instead of one. There is a summary annual review in colour on glossy paper to outline the plodding but worthy report and accounts. This shows that the institute has learnt some lessons. All the notable members on the review cover are smiling. Several are adopting a Blair-like pose with hands extended as they expound. And there is a positively blooming Teresa Graham, deputy head of the Government's Better Regulation Task Force, receiving her OBE.

It all suggests that the institute is trying. The summary review covers "some of the most prominent topics from the year". These are deemed to be self-assessment, small and medium-sized enterprises, corporate governance, fraud, enhancing the value of the qualification, and regulation. What, of course, the review does not cover is precisely what the institute is there for in these days of teetering institutions.

Chris Laine, in his president's statement, refers to "our primary tasks of educating and training, standard-setting and discipline." But sceptics could say that those tasks, particularly now that standard-setting is largely the work of another independent body, should not take up the full-time efforts of 438 staff and cost some £43 million. Even education and training, which might seem to be a large undertaking, is only related to the operation of the syllabus and the exams. The actual training is by private-sector tutors and accounting firms.

The problem lies in the confusion of the institute with the profession itself. There are 112,872 members of the institute, which makes it by far the largest accounting body in Europe. Of those members, 45 per cent are in industry, and 35 per cent are in accounting firms. Chris Laine quite rightly says that "the contribution chartered accountants make to business is enormous, some in a very public way and thousands of others in a more private way". However, institute and members are different things, and in terms of which came first, it was always members.

The recently published history of the profession, *Priesthood of Industry*, makes the point that "the emergence of accountancy as a recognised profession in Britain predates significantly the creation of the professional bodies". The accountancy firms, which these days tend to have less and less to do with the professional bodies, came first, and with the way that they are expanding their markets, they are likely to still be there long after the professional bodies have gone.

Laine refers to "our vision for the institute" as being "closer to members, accountable to members" and "more businesslike". All of which suggests that the public relations side of the institute has finally taken over the world. Worse is to come. "Our stand aim," he says, "is to have a recognisably different structure in place by June this year. The significant differences will be to have three main directorates, education and training, the professional standards office and a new members' directorate."

None of this has cheered the institute's treasurer. The place is in surplus, but mostly because it had to shell out significantly less on the joint disciplinary scheme. The figures for 1998 will be different. It will, he tells us, be a difficult year financially. Most of that difficulty will stem from the new directorates. There will be more than £1 million of capital expenditure on the property moves associated with the changes alone. And changes like these nearly always cost around double what anyone estimates.

The institute is torn. It feels it has to keep changing its ways to try to prove that it is being businesslike and accountable. But members are more likely to revolt if the institute spends millions on re-structuring than if it doesn't. The answer ought to be to do less, and to allow change to come about through the contribution to the economy of the many useful things that accountants as the president emphasised, contribute to business.

A profession is its members, not its institutional body.



ROBERT BRUCE

Blood, sweat and tears

IN THE last lap of the efforts to merge Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse, the language of the struggle is becoming increasingly Churchillian. Ian Brindle, Pw's senior partner, has a front-page piece in the firm's staff newspaper this month exhorting his troops to even greater efforts. "There is a great deal of work to be done and lots of technicalities and practicalities to be dealt with," he tells exhausted

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

readers, "but you can be sure everyone is working hard to get us up and running." Perhaps readers should then turn to the back page. "Please Give Blood," it says.

On the ball
ANYONE who had any doubts about the ambitions of the Big Six firms when they started trying to leapfrog each other through global mergers

will have them confirmed as the new Coopers & Lybrand poster campaign starts. The posters show the rim of the Earth seen from space and the slogan "It's our ball". We can now expect belligerent competing posters from the rest of the Big Six asking for their ball back.

If the interviewing panel for the job of chief executive of the English ICA are looking for a

chap with stamina, they should look no further than John Collier, warning the seat as acting chief executive. On Sunday he managed the London Marathon in just under four and a half hours.

Danger money
THE growth in risk management services provided by the large accounting firms is over. Until now there has been a

fashion for virtually every service they offer to be rebadged as risk management. Parity, this dates from the point when they discovered that clients were willing to pay higher fees for things called risk management than they were for something called audit services. But fashions change and risk management has come to the end of the road. The word "management" has become a turn-off. From now on, the big firms will be selling something called risk evaluation.

ROBERT BRUCE

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Equities higher in thin trading

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, HOUSEHOLD GOODS & TEXT, INSURANCE, DISTRIBUTORS.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: ENGINEERING VEHICLES, INVESTMENT TRUSTS, MEDIA, PHARMACEUTICALS, SUPPORT SERVICES, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, TRANSPORT, WATER.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: OTHER FINANCIAL, MINING, LEISURE & HOTELS, OIL & GAS, BRITISH FUNDS, RETAILERS FOOD, RETAILERS GENERAL.

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: OTHER FINANCIAL, PHARMACEUTICALS, SUPPORT SERVICES, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, TRANSPORT, WATER, RETAILERS FOOD, RETAILERS GENERAL, ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET.

ASCOOT advertisement: Head and shoulders above the rest. Royal Ascot - four days that not only offer an atmospheric cocktail of the turf, priceless horses and the most extraordinary fashion parade in the world...

Table of stock prices categorized by industry: SHORTS (under 5 years), LONGS (over 15 years), UNDATED, MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years), INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation.

Vertical text on the left margin: tables for Olives, chairman, or RZH, s 1,300 jobs, Is flourish, loss around, to count bodies.

Vertical text on the right margin: EQUITY PRICES 35.

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized by fund name, price, and change. Includes sections for various fund categories like Equity, Bond, and Money Market.

Advertisement for Thomson Group with the headline 'Don't miss the float.' and 'Deadline for applications is 12 noon, Thursday 7 May 1998.'

Disclaimer text: 'The advertisement has been issued by, and is the sole responsibility of, Thomson Trust Group plc and has been prepared for the purpose of section 57 of the Financial Services Act 1996 by Thomson Trust Group plc.'

Arabic text at the bottom of the page: 'مكتبة النخيل' (Al-Nakhil Library).

BUSINESS TRAVEL

FOCUS

Julia Brookes introduces a three-page report on the range of services on offer to win — and keep — the executive traveller's custom

Bloody Mary and a massage to go

Manicures and massages at 35,000ft say more about the state of business air travel than any heavyweight industry analysis could ever reveal. They are among the huge range of services offered to business-class passengers, as a result of intense competition between airlines that have raised fares by 25 per cent in the past two years, and are now charging up to £3,000 for a return flight to New York. As well as shoulder- and neck massages, passengers in Virgin Atlantic's Upper Class can take advantage of a chauffeur-driven car to the airport with back-seat check-in, then have a haircut and a Bloody Mary in the Virgin Clubhouse before they jump on the plane. As Western stock markets continue to surge and airline profits soar, long-haul carriers are determined to hang on to their business clients, wooing them with perks that, five years ago, were not normally available even in first class. And first class itself, the demise of which was widely predicted during the last recession, is now packed with full-fare-paying business passengers. This has prompted a rethink by carriers such as British Airways and Air France, Lufthansa and, most recently, Qantas. Business travellers account for a large chunk of an airline's revenue — for example, while just 6 per cent of all United Airlines' passengers come into this category, they bring in 37 per cent of its revenue. Such is the value of globe-trotting executives that they're getting special treatment even in economy.

Virgin, Taiwan's Eva Air and now Air France (in Europe) have introduced a third class for those whose company travel policies force them to travel economy but who still pay a full rather than a discounted fare. And in America carriers, including Northwest and United, which don't separate economy passengers, have been testing schemes that allow business travellers two pieces of carry-on luggage, while those with discounted fares may take just one. On short-haul flights in Europe, however, the trend is to shun luxury service in pursuit of financial savings. In the past two years British business-class fares have increased by 21 per cent, according to the latest American Express European Business Travel Index. These increases and the fact that many companies have kept a tighter rein on expenses since the recession, have allowed no-frills carriers such as easyJet, Ryanair and Virgin Express to quickly grab a significant slice of the market. Customers are not put off by the fact that many flights operate from secondary airports. The majority (87 per cent) of business travellers questioned for a recent Carlson Wagonlit Travel/MORI survey said they would use one of these carriers for a short-haul flight in Europe. It is estimated that the market will quadruple over the next five years and will account for 13.5 per cent of all traffic. No wonder British Airways has plunged into the fray with its own low-cost brand, Go. Meanwhile, despite hotel rates reaching historic highs everywhere from Bombay to emerging markets such as Baku, those who still have business in the Far East have been enjoying dramatically cheaper accommodation, thanks to the region's economic crisis. But nothing lasts for ever and in Bangkok the devaluation of the baht has led 12 major hotels in the city to follow Indonesia's lead and price rooms in American dollars from this month. Furthermore, hotels in Bangkok are reporting high occupancies because of the increase in tourism from Europe and the growing number of European executives coming in to troubleshoot or sniff out a bargain. According to Austin Frost, the European marketing director for Shangri-La Hotels: "Generally we haven't seen a downturn from the European business market at all. There's still a lot of work to be done but the business community realises that there are opportunities to be had." But bargain-priced hotels or not, airlines operating in the region are expected to record a \$2 billion drop in profits in 1998. Qantas, Asiana, British Airways, JAL, Northwest and United are among the carriers that have cancelled services or adjusted schedules, and in March Cathay Pacific announced that its 1997 profits were down 55 per cent on the

previous year. If nobody could have foreseen the extent of the Asian meltdown, it is easier to predict some of the significant developments in business travel over the next decade. Carriers such as Virgin Atlantic are planning cabins that will be more like hotel rooms, reflecting the fact that executives are spending more time than ever on aircraft. Company Barclaycard's 1998 survey found that the average British business traveller will spend 156 days of the working year out of the office, covering more than 24,000 miles, and will fly business class at least seven times. On the ground, the key words will be speed, efficiency and control. Faster and simpler electronic booking will revolutionise the way hotel reservations are made and airline tickets bought. Business hotels without the latest communications capabilities will go the way of the dinosaurs. There will be more fast-track lines and exclusive lounges at airports, executive fitness regimes and alternative therapies in an attempt to maintain peak performance. The first gym at an American airport has opened at Pittsburgh and more will follow; there's even a floatation tank in the Radisson Edwardian Hotel at Heathrow. "Everybody's looking for a fix to help them de-stress; it's becoming an integral part of the business day," says Joanna Bloxham, the marketing services manager. The way things are going, it would be no surprise to see airlines providing on-board spas in the next year or two. Julia Brookes is editor-in-chief of Business Traveller

Executives get special treatment even in economy



Today's business travellers are demanding greater levels of cabin comfort and in-flight service than ever before

Sorry for the delay, have a good stretch

IN-FLIGHT PAMPERING
Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic could be the next airline to offer a quantum leap for business travellers. Industry sources suggest that Virgin's Upper-Class cabin could be getting a radical overhaul for the first time in more than a decade, with the introduction of "sleeper" seats similar to those found in the first-class cabins of British Airways and Air France. The significance of the Virgin move would be to offer a business-class product ahead of all its rivals, charging the same business-class fares for seats that are effectively first class in comfort. It was BA two years ago, in fact, that achieved the last significant breakthrough for long-haul business air travellers with its move from a pitch of 40in to 50in, as well as developing its so-called "cradle" seat which is aimed at giving better in-flight comfort with extra lumbar supports, foot-rests and so on. While Virgin and some of the smaller transatlantic carriers, such as Continental and Air Canada, can afford to give more leg-room in business class because of their relatively fewer scheduled services, the much larger carriers cannot afford to be so generous because of a growing demand



Continental can offer more space than larger airlines for seats in business-class. In-flight services in business class are also constantly being tweaked, with food being one of the areas under constant review. The trends among the long-haul carriers continue to be to serve lighter meals and to offer greater choice and freedom of when to eat. On the "red-eye" flights back from the US to the UK, for example, the aim is to get a light meal served as quickly as possible. Snacking during a long flight for those who wake up is another new feature of business-class services. While most of the key developments in in-flight services have come in the long-haul business cabins, airlines in Europe are making strenuous efforts to improve services. They are well aware of the competition from low-cost carriers, as well as most corporate travel policies which insist executives fly economy in Europe, unless there are special circumstances. It is ironic, however, that for all the effort and resources spent by the airlines on improving their business-class cabins — both long-haul and short-haul — the key concern of most business travellers is whether the airline will get them to their destination on a schedule convenient to them, as well as on time. Unfortunately for the airlines, punctuality is something they have least control over — so more pampering in-flight is likely to become even more the name of the game as the skies get more crowded.

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Colin Ellson reports on the future of the five airports serving the growing demands of the capital

London's airports set for expansion

There is a spring in the step of the authorities at London's five major airports as they launch a seasonal rash of new routes, improve their facilities and enjoy unprecedented growth in passenger figures.

If there is a cloud on the horizon at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City, it is how they will cope with predictions that the number of passengers queuing up to fly out of southeast England will double in the next 15 years.

The case for providing sufficient capacity is as much to do with the economic survival of the capital in the face of European competition as it is with the increasing demands of travellers.

London's continuing status as a leading world city is integral to the success of its major airports," says Jon Phillips, spokesman for the BAA, which operates Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted.

He watched with vested interest recently as the French opened another terminal at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris and granted themselves permission to build two more

runways. Meanwhile, the public inquiry into Heathrow's proposed Terminal 5 (T5), which would increase the annual passenger capacity of the world's busiest international airport from 58 million to 80-85 million, is now in its third year, the longest-ever hearing on a development project in the UK.

It is expected to finish this autumn, with bureaucracy delaying a government decision until spring 2000, and construction - if approved - taking up to five years.

The BAA is confident that T5, which would not require an extra runway or involve

'Constrained at Heathrow, British Airways has chosen to grow at Gatwick'

night flights, will get the green light, and is pushing ahead with improvements designed to provide it with a fully-integrated transport system.

These include the launch of the £440 million Heathrow Express in June, allowing a 15-minute journey time from Paddington, with a sister ser-



Luton Airport: it is to spend £170 million on expansion to cope with a predicted target of 8.5 million passengers

vice from St Pancras planned for 2000.

The BAA is also widening access roads, has reached agreement with London Underground to extend the Piccadilly line to T5, and is studying the feasibility of new rail links.

The BAA is confident that T5, which would not require an extra runway or involve

the airline has chosen to grow at Gatwick," says Martin Wyatt, British Airways' general manager at Gatwick. "Even with the proposed Terminal 5 at Heathrow, Gatwick's future role for BA is vital."

British Airways' commitment has been a spur to other airlines. This year Gatwick will operate its biggest summer schedule, with increased frequencies and a number of new routes, including Palma, Dubrovnik, Knock in Ireland, the Red Sea resort of Sharm El Sheikh, Philadelphia, Miami and Boston.

The influx means Gatwick serves 276 destinations, among them 20 North American cities, more than any other European gateway, including Heathrow. Forecasting an increase from the current 27 million passengers a year to 30

million by the millennium, the BAA is investing £500 million to improve facilities.

British Airways' diversification has also given a boost to Stansted, which has struggled to overcome its remote and inaccessible image. In fact, the Essex airport is just 40 minutes by rail from Liverpool

when easyJet introduced scheduled services in 1995, followed by low-cost Debonair in 1996.

Today their networks span 16 of the 25 destinations accessible from Luton, which include Amsterdam, Belfast, Copenhagen, Dublin, Edinburgh, Geneva, Madrid, Milan, Munich, Paris and Rome.

This year, Luton expects to handle 3.4 million passengers, increasing to 5 million over the next three years, and will spend £170 million on developments, including a new railway station, to cope eventually with 8.5 million.

In purely statistical terms, however, none of London's other airports can match London City. Once dubbed a white elephant, it began a new phase when it was given permission for jet operations in 1992 and the Limehouse Link road to the City opened.

But the Docklands airport owes much of its phenomenal growth to a change of ownership. Dublin businessman Dermot Desmond buying it from John Mowlem in October 1995.

Since then the new owner has increased the number of airlines flying from London City to 11 and the range of European destinations to 20 - while passenger figures have risen by 100 per cent to top 1 million.

The next stage of expansion is linked to an application to double the number of air transport movements.

Once dubbed a white elephant, City now handles more than 1m passengers

Street, as passengers flying on BAA's budget-price operation Go will discover from May 22.

That is when the new no-frills airline begins daily flights to Milan, Copenhagen and Rome, joining the new European operations of SAS, Braathens, Croatia Airlines, AB Airlines, BAE, and Sabena/Virgin Express, who will launch a joint budget service to Brussels on May 17.

Now serving more than 50 destinations, and anticipating some 7 million passengers this year, compared to 5.4 million in 1997, Stansted forecasts annual growth of 12 per cent.

It is launching rail services to Birmingham and Liverpool on May 24, and spending £16 million on a new building.

Stansted's claim to be the capital's budget gateway would be hotly disputed by London Luton Airport. Some 32 miles and 35 minutes by train and airport shuttle bus from King's Cross, it was a pioneer of the no-frills concept

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The 1998 Executive Club handbook from BA devotes more than 40 pages to how to earn Air Miles from its airline, hotel, car rental and other partners. If you use a BA Diners Club Card, or BA Executive Club NatWest credit card, extra mileage points will accrue (as will buying a gallon of petrol or a candlelit dinner for two).

It's a complex business, which is what BA likes. Four of every five regular business travellers interviewed by Carlson Wagonlit recently belonged to BA's Executive Club. Yet 38 per cent admitted they had no idea which airline operated the best rewards, and last year only half bothered to redeem their points.

Meanwhile, BA and other operators of frequent-flyer schemes are tracking the travelling, eating, sleeping and spending habits of their best customers and buying their loyalty with rewards.

With the majority of companies allowing their employees to retain their points and rewards, travellers are guzzling for a free bottle of champagne, access to an airline lounge or an upgrade.

The Carlson survey showed that of those who redeemed their points, 56 per cent secured their first choice of travel. Airlines keep only a small percentage of seats for members, so competition is fierce on popular routes.

Another survey, by Barclaycard, showed that two thirds of travellers would like airlines to offer more incentives, and airlines are responding.

Virgin Atlantic, for example, offers 5,000 miles if travellers become members of The Roof Gardens, Richard Branson's nightclub. El Al offers extra points on duty-free bought in the air; KLM does the same when shopping at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam.

According to research from

the Target Group Index, the long-haul traveller has 42 memberships of a scheme. But there is evidence that when a business traveller has the choice, he or she will often be persuaded to fly one airline ahead of another. One survey estimates that regular travellers change 10 per cent of travel plans to benefit from particular programmes.

"We have quoted fares up to £1,000 cheaper than have been turned down in favour of Air Miles," said the business travel manager of an Edinburgh travel agency.

BA defends its tactic of rewarding the individual. "Whether you give a free ticket or a meal, it is something over and above the basic carriage of that person from A to B - and therefore something that is applicable to them," said Robert Ayling, the chief executive.

According to the OAG Business Travel Lifestyle survey, nearly three quarters of US business travellers were upgraded in one 12-month period, and more than 60 per cent of those had been upgraded at least once in their previous five flights.

In Britain, only half the respondents got an upgrade on their previous five flights. Often, an upgrade can be won by being well-dressed at the gate.

Upgrading a hotel room is much more straightforward. Members of Westin, Hilton and Marriott programmes, receive upgrades once they reach the first elite-level tier.

Some people are determined to win an upgrade at any cost. One frequent flyer booked all ten first-class seats on a United flight under fictitious names, to ensure the seats were offered as upgrades when left empty.

The airline noticed, however, that all the bookings were made from the same telephone number. Too late to sell the seats, passengers were picked at random at the gate to fill the seats, leaving the phantom booker in economy.

STEVE KEENAN



It's a gift: some regulars prefer Air Miles to discounts

The world at your fingertips

Working on the move is increasingly important for business travellers, and a wide range of electronic gadgets - from familiar digital organisers to sophisticated satellite phones is available to make keeping in touch easier.

Executives who need to travel with a computer can choose from hand-held devices costing a few hundred pounds to laptops costing £4,000.

A survey by the American Express Business Travel Barometer found that 40 per cent of business travellers use laptops on trips abroad, and almost as many use mobile phones.

"As the pressures of work mount and the number of trips abroad increases, business travellers are demanding better services, delivered more quickly and with greater flexibility," said Iain Robinson, Amex's head of UK business travel.

Laptops are available with facilities to match a full-size desktop machine. The latest in IBM's ThinkPad range feature keyboards that slot inside a notebook-computer case, but unfold to near-desktop size.

Screens are advancing at a similar pace, with most manufacturers offering at least 13.3in TFT active matrix display, giving a larger viewing area than a typical 14in desktop monitor. CD-Rom drives are becoming standard, allowing travellers full access to a range of multimedia, as well as providing an easier way to install software.

The modular design of many newer laptops allows travellers to swap the CD-Rom drive for an extra battery or other accessories. For long-haul flights, an



Mobile office: Posio has fax, e-mail and Internet facilities

extra battery is handy because few of these high-powered machines will last even three hours on a full charge. Battery-guzzling laptops have become such a problem for travellers that at least one major airline, Delta, is installing personal power points for computers at every business-class seat, and others, which already offer charging stations, are expected to follow.

David Randall, a Citibank vice-president whose role includes purchasing and travel management, says that carrying all the support equipment is a major irritant.

"I travel with a laptop and mobile phone but need a package of equipment to keep me going: different plugs for the Continent and the United States, chargers for the computer and the phone. But it all allows me to keep in constant touch. I can sit in an airport and do business, or work in a conference room while waiting for the people I am due to see."

For those who require less powerful machines, mini-notebook and "palmtop" computers are available. Mini-notebooks such as the new Hitachi model, the Toshiba Libretto and some Mitsubishi Amiti models can, in theory, do everything a desktop computer can and cost about £1,250. Their main disadvantage as portable gadgets are their weight, power consump-

tion and the time it takes to start them up.

Palmtops, including the Psion 5 series which costs £375, provide a good compromise solution. They can do everything a digital organiser can and are also powerful enough to run useful word-processing, spreadsheet and database programs. Their battery life is much better than that of notebooks.

For those who want instant global communication but cannot cope with computers, an increasing number of portable fax systems is available, including European Telecom's recently launched Paxis PM80. Linked to a GSM cellular phone, it can access the Internet, send and receive e-mails and scan documents into its memory.

For those who want to keep in touch from anywhere on earth, satellite phones are the answer. They cost from £2,500, are the same size as a desk phone, and calls are charged at £1.85 a minute.

As an increasing number of hotels and airlines offer modern computer facilities, many travellers are finding it unnecessary to carry complete computers.

A new trend is to carry just the contents of the computer - all the software, files and projects. This is made possible by removable cartridge drives, such as the Iomega Zip and SyQuest SparQ. Even with all connecting leads and a multivoltage power supply, the weight is still less than half a full-size notebook system, and the cost less than a tenth.

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Paint the sky with your name

Hire an air taxi in your own livery and save time and money, says

Chris Lockwood

Business aviation is booming on the back of economic recovery as executives opt increasingly for private highways in the sky. Gone are the days when private flying was an expensive treat. It is now a genuine option for those executives who cannot afford to waste time at airports, on motorways or in stacks in the sky.

It is pricey, but in terms of time-saving and prestige, nothing matches the corporate jet or chartered air taxi. Companies can buy their own aircraft, purchase a part-share in one, or choose to charter for specific trips. According to the General Aviation Manufacturers and Traders Association, which represents and endorses the fly-on-demand sector of the industry, there are numerous advantages. "You have the flexibility to reach thousands more airports than those served by the airlines, plus the ability to save precious and expensive top-management time," says Graham Forbes, its chief executive.

In addition, privacy and discretion are guaranteed as private aircraft have access to separate arrivals buildings, with dedicated customs and immigration processing. According to Mr Forbes, such discretion is increasingly important to top executives, pop groups and commercial enterprises, especially when doing business in parts of the world beyond the scope of normal commercial airline networks.

"This is especially true at points within the former Soviet Union and in the Middle East, where private arrival and departure carries its own particular prestige," he says.

For example, Interflight, based at Gatwick, will do all it can to make it appear that aircraft belong to the charterer. Seat headrests, meal-tray covers and other elements of cabins can be decked out in the livery of the chartering company, says David Newcomb, its operations manager.

The carrier recently completed a



Grand entrance: the Spice Girls announce their presence, and their movie, on the livery of an Air London jet; below, the interior of an executive jet

contract typical of the top end of the market when it operated a British Aerospace 146 jet (which can carry up to 100 passengers) for a merchant bank on a three-day tour of Eastern Europe. Only 40 investment fund managers were aboard, with \$6 billion to invest in Estonia, Poland and Romania. They were cosseted by six cabin crew, twice the number usually found aboard the same aircraft type in scheduled airline service.

As in all such charter flying, Mr Newcomb says, flight and cabin crew stayed with the aircraft and its passengers through the three days and were able to meet any changes in departure and arrival times as they occurred.

In the air taxi field, the BAe 146 is unusually large. Normal operations are by smaller types from four-seater piston-engined models to those considered to be top of the executive aircraft range, the Raytheon Hawker HS125 jet, and the long-range Gulfstream and Dassault Falcon 900 which can easily cross the Atlantic with up to 19 passengers aboard.

"The range of aircraft can be compared to that available from a car-rental company," says Alan Marler, the director of operations for



Air London, the biggest air charter broker in Europe, and probably in the world, with offices in London, Gatwick, Paris, Cologne and Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"Selecting the right type of aircraft is very much like choosing the right car," he says. "You can drive yourself to Glasgow with four passengers in a Metro, for example, but it will be a much more comfortable run in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce."

He says that smaller prop-powered aircraft such as the Piper Aztec and the Beechcraft Baron still typify the public perception of "air taxi", but the business has moved on to a more modern range of jets, including the Gulfstream, HS125, and Falcon, which rarely fly to full capacity. "We are talking about limousine people here," he says. "Those who fly Concorde, when they fly scheduled at all. Those who accept time-pressure and prestige as both the price and the pleasure of fame or wealth."

Commercial airline fares may be lower, yet the private charter can offer local airport departures and three or four destinations in Europe in a single day without the need for overnight hotel accommodation, and with the utmost flexibility about take-off time.

Mr Marler estimates that the executive aircraft market in Britain is now worth at least £80 million and three times that for the whole of Europe.

In the Middle East, private arrival carries extra prestige

Room with en suite gym

Some business travellers staying at London's newest five-star hotel — One Aldwych which opens shortly on the original 1907 central London site of the *Morning Post* newspaper — will be able to take advantage of private gyms installed in their suites rather than having to sweat it out with their peers. The gyms in this stylish new 105-room hotel are part of the efforts by London's top business hotels to offer extra incentives to business travellers willing to pay an average of £265 per night, according to a recent survey — and up to £950 a night for the top suites in One Aldwych — for unremitting luxury.

Offering added value — and charging for it — is the name of the game for London hoteliers at present. The Inter-Continental Hotel on Park Lane, for example, has just opened a new Club Floor offering larger bedrooms and suites, all with desks including an integral fax/printer/copier and personal safe. Staying on the Club Floor costs premium rates, starting at £320 a night. This concept has been taken a stage further by some business travel agencies, including American Express and Carlson Wagonlit Travel. Amex, for example, has recently sponsored a whole floor at the 690-room Mount Royal Thisle Hotel, just off London's Oxford Street, while Carlson has taken ten rooms at the Jarvis International Hotel at Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

Both Amex and Carlson have agreed to fill the rooms each night. Benefits include, at the Amex floor at the Mount Royal Thisle, a business centre with secretarial support. A private gym is due to be added by early summer. At the Jarvis International in Hatfield all of the Carlson rooms have a personal computer with access to the internet. But executives on the move are becoming more choosy, according to a survey of more than 6,000 frequent business travellers carried out earlier this year by Inter-Continental Hotels. This found, not surprisingly, that quiet and spot-

lessly-clean rooms were still the top requirement. After this it was communication facilities, such as modern points and voice-mail, that were considered most important. But following closely behind in the list of priorities was safety, with an overwhelming majority of those surveyed emphasising that they wanted hotels situated in safe locations and with extra security within hotels. Non-smoking rooms are increasingly in demand and guests wanted more control over temperature and humidity levels within their rooms. And the days of formal restaurants could be numbered, with

business travellers looking for a choice of informal and healthier food.

Michael Stajdel, a senior marketing vice-president for Inter-Continental, says: "While hotel guests of the future will want to feel secure at the same time they want access to luxury to enhance their stay."

The strength of demand for rooms in the capital has seen a clutch of new properties opened in the biggest hotel expansion in the city for decades. The London Convention Bureau reports that at least 10,000 new hotel bedrooms are currently under construction or planned.

Business hotels include the new Marriott Hotel housed in the former offices of the Greater London Council on the south side of the Thames opposite the Houses of Parliament (and football fans) in west London, the Chelsea Village Hotel is located in a complex adjacent to the football stadium and offers 160 rooms on 11 floors.

Elsewhere in London, former British Telecom offices are being turned into a new four-star 120-room hotel opposite London Bridge station, which is on a direct link to Gatwick Airport. Watch out, too, for new "designer" hotels from fashionable New York hotelier Ian Schrager, who is turning a couple of empty office blocks into smart hotels.



The Business Centre lounge at the Mount Royal Hotel

DAVID CHURCHILL

RING your travel agent or the airline, and book and pay for a flight over the phone. Then turn up at the airport, check in and board, no ticket necessary.

This is how electronic ticketing works. And although it has not quite ushered in paperless travel, a boarding pass is issued, and a fax sent confirming itinerary, receipt of payment and, for international services, details of the airline's liability under the Warsaw Convention — it is widely used for UK domestic services. By 2005 most US domestic flights will also use the system.

There is now no need to deliver tickets to a traveller's office or home, and panics over tickets on departure are no longer an issue. Last-minute changes to a journey are possible without altering the ticket.

The itinerary is also proof

Pitfalls of the paperless chase

E-TICKETING

of payment for a return ticket. This reassures customs and immigration officials on arrival at your destination and can also act as a reminder if the trip has to be cancelled and a refund arranged.

Mike Platt, the director of commercial affairs for Hogg Robinson Business Travel International (BTR), says: "The benefits are cost savings for the airlines. E-ticketing also makes it more difficult for passengers to change airlines as they have to find someone to issue a paper ticket so it can be

endorsed for travel with another carrier."

But the Guild of Business Travel Agents (GBTA) notes that passengers have seen no benefit from the savings made by airlines. Don Linn, the chairman of GBTA's Air Working Party, says: "The present inefficiencies [of e-ticketing] mean the traveller is paying too high a price for the considerable savings that accrue to the airline — and only the airline."

"Passengers are entirely in the hands of the carrier holding the e-ticket reservation," he adds. "Paper tickets

are still essential in certain circumstances, for example, if a system crashes, refunds are needed, or if there is a last-minute change of mind. Until ticketless travel is easier, more reassuring and cheaper, there is no benefit to the traveller."

One problem of e-tickets — refunds — has been addressed by Hogg Robinson. "Passengers would automatically send a paper ticket for a refund, but without it they tend to forget their company will still be charged," says Mr Platt. A means of checking the system is needed and Hogg Robinson has developed automated software to track which tickets have been used and which have not.

CATHERINE CHETWYND

For further information on e-ticketing, visit the IATA Web site on www.iata.org.

Taking a snooze in the clouds

SLEEPER SEATS

THE NUMBER of passengers paying full fare in first class is a good barometer of a healthy economy. If someone is willing to pay almost £5,000 to fly London-New York in the front cabin, then things can't be all that bad.

However, as a result of passenger famine during the recession, some airlines, such as KLM and Continental, decided to give up on first class altogether and merged first and business-class cabins into one.

More recently, however, business-class passengers have become frustrated at the number of people queuing up to fill the front cabin. They often exceed the number of seats and upgrades have become rare. Airlines have responded with a rash of activity in the front cabin, centred on more comfortable seats.

Research established that what top-ranking business travellers wanted most of all was privacy. Most don't want to stay awake to avail themselves of the increasing number of distractions, from films, eating and drinking to shopping or gambling. They might want to work, so laptop power and an in-seat phone is useful.

What Singapore Airlines has started to do this month typifies the reaction by airlines. On a single 747 flying between London and Singapore and on the Singapore-Taipei-Tokyo route, the Asian airline has installed 16 fully reclining seats.

The new seat is a combined work and sleep unit.

It reclines to 180 degrees, has a seat pitch of 83in, is fitted with noise-reducing headphones, a moveable divider for greater privacy when the seat is reclined, an integral laptop power supply and an in-seat telephone.

Air France triggered the rash of activity with the launch of a flying seat-bed called L'Espace 180 which offers an 82in seat pitch. Customers also receive a quilt, pillows and sleep suit.

British Airways followed with an almost identical seat, but with less legroom (78in). Japan Airlines responded to customer requests for a seat-bed with Sky Sleeper. Seat pitch is 83in and duvet and pillow are supplied. Next on the starting block was Lufthansa, offering similar levels of comfort.

Already unveiled is a leather and fabric-mix seat-bed from Qantas. The Australian airline claims it will be the most advanced on the market when passengers are able to try it themselves from June.

Not to be outdone by its near rival, Air New Zealand has introduced a seat six inches longer as an interim move before formally launching a seat-bed.

Other elements of the in-flight service and comfort have also been enhanced. Qantas is going all out with a menu devised by a celebrity chef which focuses on the freshest ingredients from each departure point. Air New Zealand is already employing the services of another celebrity chef.

GILLIAN UPTON



At your service: Qantas sleeper seat

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Bargains of the week: from Cotswolds gardens to music festivals in Bath, Londonderry and the Bahamas



PACK YOUR BAGS
A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and further afield, many at bargain prices:

BRITAIN

WITH the early May bank holiday almost upon us, thoughts are turning to the deals still available over the month's second bank holiday. Among offers from Modern Hotels are a week from May 23 at St Helier on Jersey for £314, including catamaran crossing from Poole and half-board. Children between two and 11 travel and stay at half-price. Details: 01534 35511

A JAZZ and blues festival with international stars will set Londonderry swinging over the late May bank holiday and the Trinity Hotel in the city offers B&B from £70 a night. Flights from Gatwick are available from Jersey

European from £162 return. Details: hotel, 01504 27171; flights, 0990 676676. Bath also features jazz, as part of an international music festival, and Sunvil UK has two nights' B&B at the Georgian Fountain House Hotel on May 22 and 23 from £149. Details: 0181-232 9788.

GRANNY'S COTTAGE in Clare, Suffolk, handy for Newmarket and pretty gardens and villages, is among properties still available from May 23 from Country Holidays. It sleeps four and costs £337. Details: 01282 445095.

FAMOUS Cotswolds gardens feature in new tours planned by Compass Holidays. Two-night breaks, including B&B and entrance fees, cost from £135. Details: 01242 250642.

POLO at Cowdray Park, racing at Goodwood and rolling countryside are all within easy reach of Midhurst, West Sussex, where the Spread Eagle Hotel and Health Spa is offering summer breaks for £166 at weekends, £156 mid-week, including two nights' dinner, B&B and full use of facilities. Details: 01730 816911.

EUROPE

CORFU for £139 for a fortnight's self-catering is the best of several late Mediterranean bargains from Page & Moy. Fly from Manchester on Sunday. Details: 0116-250 7116.

MALTA for a week for £129 is another good offer and is available from Sunset Holidays at the Bugibba complex with a flight from Gatwick on May 7. Details: 01204 434441.

THE ALGARVE is a golfers' paradise, especially in May when Something Special is offering course discounts on holidays in selected villas. Four flying from Gatwick on May 7 for a week in a villa near Albufeira, for example, will pay £239 each, including car hire, plus £28 a round. Details: 01992 557573.

AMALFI and Tuscany coast hotels feature in offers from Citalia. Return flights from Gatwick and a week's half-board from May 8 or 9 cost from £349. Details: 0181-686 5533.

BOTANICAL walks and birdwatching in the rugged mountains of northern Corsica

from Calvi to Corte are included in a week's trip with Naturetrek, departing London on May 10. The tour costs £595 with flights, accommodation, all meals and guides. Details: 01962 733051.

PRAGUE's baroque splendour is combined with the beauty of the Tatra Mountains in an intriguing 15-day trip through the Czech Republic and Slovakia with Explore Worldwide. Starting in May, the tours cost from £595, including flights, hotel accommodation, some meals and guides. Details: 01252 344161.

TEN NIGHTS in Gran Canaria from May 11 on a self-catering Thomson holiday are available from Lunn Poly for £199 with a flight from Gatwick. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

A CLASH of cultures is on offer from Campus Travel for its packages to Expo 98 in Lisbon (theme: the heritage of the oceans) include two nights' accommodation in Bedouin-style tents. The three-day trip with return flights and entrance to the exhibition, opening on May 22, costs from £199 for students and under-26s. Details: 0171-730 3402.



SHOWBOAT opens in the West End this week and features in the new Theatrebreak programme from Superbreak. Prices range from £125 a person for the best seats and B&B in a three-star hotel to £185 for five-star accommodation and dinner. Details: 0161-238 5257

LONG HAUL

TORONTO flights from Gatwick at short notice and for a fixed term are available for £207 return. Either fly on Monday and return by May 20 with Advantage Travel Centres or fly on May 7 and return a week or a fortnight later with Flying Colours. Details: ATC, 0870 909070; FC, 01204 434441.

SEYCHELLES offers are few and far between but if you are ready to fly from Gatwick by Wednesday you can pick up a deal from Somak Holidays which has a week's B&B at the Reef Hotel on Mahé for £339 or 12 nights for £999. Details: 0181-423 3000.

A FLORIDA deal from Belfast is another rare offer and is available from Unijet with a flight to Orlando on May 11. The package includes a fortnight's car hire and costs £299 with vehicle insurance extra. Details: 0990 336336.

A NEW TRAIN through the world's oldest desert is among attractions on ten-night tours to Namibia and South Africa with South African Odyssey. Five nights in

Cape Town with car hire are included, plus return flights from Heathrow and some meals for £1,368, until June 30. Details: 01242 224482.

THE LATEST fares deal down under, Heathrow to Perth for £475 return, comes from Austravel's Great Escape and is available for Malaysia Airlines flights until June 15. Details: 0171-584 0202.

BOOGIE in the Bahamas at the end of May when Nassau and Freeport host the Caribbean Muzik Festival with a variety of styles and street parties. British Airways Holidays has packages for a week during festival time at a beach resort from £699. Details: 01293 723161.

All prices are per person and based on two sharing a room, unless otherwise stated.

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See The Times on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

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In the end, you won't mind the gaps

NEW MOVIES: Charm - and Gwyneth Paltrow - make up for the failings of *Sliding Doors*, says Geoff Brown

This is an exciting week for the London Underground. Mornington Crescent station is finally reopened, after six years. And Gwyneth Paltrow, that new, swanlike Hollywood star, comes over to an alternate reality by travelling on the Tube in the romantic comedy *Sliding Doors*. What more could any London commuter ask?

Paltrow's presence and *Sliding Doors* are not the only novelties in this first directorial venture by the British actor Peter Howitt. For the film, written by Howitt, develops two separate stories from the same starting point: one is the reality, the other a "what if" variation.

Flustered and angry after being sacked from her PR job, Paltrow's Helen runs down the station stairs and just misses her train. Then the film rewinds. The Tube doors slide shut once more, but this time she makes it. She sits next to John Hannah, in no mood to enjoy his friendly chatter and piquant Scots accent. Her mood gets worse once she arrives home to find her boyfriend, a shambling writer, bedding a former lover. Back in her other life, Helen catches the next train, gets mugged on the street and arrives home later, all infidelities hidden.

Confusing? Not really. For, as the lives of the two Helens evolve, visual signposts stop us getting lost. The mugged Helen wears a bandage over her right eye; the other one cuts and dyes her blonde hair to celebrate leaving her unfaithful partner. Not that it finally matters much: the split narrative perspective comes to seem a complication grafted on to an otherwise lightweight romance.

The film unfolds in the 1990s version of Swinging London: prosperous, hygienic, full of media workers in Calvin Klein clothes enjoying pleasure outings on the Thames and walks under Putney Bridge's twinkling lights. No wonder American financiers (Sydney Pollack's Mirage Productions) gave the script the green light: they sniffed another *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

But, for a film so intent on cosmetic beauty, some strange disfiguring misjudgments are made. John Lynch's unfaithful boyfriend comes across as a louse, a liar, a nitwit and bore; a character so unsympathetic

Sliding Doors
Empire, 15, 99 mins
Gwyneth Paltrow hits swinging London

Breakdown
Odeon West End, 15, 93 mins
Kurt Russell suffers car trouble and worse

My Son the Fanatic
Odeon Haymarket, 15, 89 mins
Fetiching multicultural drama

Scream 2
Warner West End, 18, 120 mins
"Carnage candy - your audience just expects it"

that you ache for the camera to move on elsewhere, although preferably not to his harpie lover, played by Jeanne Tripplehorn. As director, Howitt does his own script few favours by banging out scene after scene in a visually graceless manner.

Luckily, others pile on the charm. Hannah's character may be an obvious confection - in real life, any man who spatters his patter with regurgitated lines from *Monty Python* is best avoided - but he handles the assignment with discretion. And Paltrow is always winning, tripping lightly through both her realities with poise, sparkle and a decent London accent. Deep down, this film is much ado about nothing; but then, so is some Shakespeare.

Examined under a microscope, *Breakdown may also look slight: just another tale of a stranger-stranded in redneck country. Oliver Stone's *U Turn* spun one exuberant variation on this last week. By comparison, director Jonathan Mostow does nothing fancy; the cameraman rarely swirls, the editor stays sober. But the tension is palpable as our Everyman hero, Kurt Russell, drives his dazzling red car into trouble. The engine conks out somewhere in the American Southwest, land of red earth and bizarre outcrops of rock. The mobile phone is no help here: Russell, poor fellow, is "out of range".*

Then an 18-wheel truck thunders by. The driver is polite and solicitous. He is also

J.T. Walsh, which is not good news. He gives Russell's wife Kathleen Quinn a lift to a diner, and a phone, five miles away. She never returns. Once Russell is able to search, the hostile locals deny all knowledge; so does Walsh, when caught up on the road. Walsh, who died of a heart attack earlier this year, is particularly splendid as the ruthless villain, lord of a gang of desert extortionists. But Russell gives him a good run for his money, chasing and being chased, banishing the worst of a white-water river, clinging for dear life to a truck's undercarriage.

This kind of material can easily appear trite and punctured with loopholes, but *Mostow* and his excellent cast manage to make most things look sensible. The film, incidentally, opened in America a year ago; you would have thought the distributors were ashamed of it.

Haniif Kureishi, scriptwriter of *My Son the Fanatic*, describes it as "a romantic film with ideological edges". It is also a comedy, and a portrait of a multicultural Britain, far removed from the chic, all-white surroundings of *Sliding Doors*. A mixed bag of goods, then, and a difficult one for any director to tie up satisfactorily. Udayan Prasad, the admirable director of *Brothers in Trouble*, never fully succeeds, but his instinctive visual sense and compassionate sense of humour still make the film easy to enjoy.

The setting, unspecified, is in the North of England: Bradford will do. The hero, Parvez, is a taxi driver from Pakistan, almost unduly proud of his adopted country, who spends long hours ferrying lecherous businessmen like Stellan Skarsgard's Schitz to and from prostitutes. One of them, a white girl, Bettina, becomes Parvez's friend, and the friendship grows intimate just when his son starts to dig deep into fundamentalist beliefs. A Pakistani holy man and a swarm of acolytes take up residence in the family house. A crusade is launched against the city's prostitutes. "This boy is massacring my life!" Parvez cries.

Kureishi's dialogue is witty, his satire light, his situations stacked with multiple ironies. With strong performances, however, we might not know



Split personality Gwyneth Paltrow and the Monty Python-spouting John Hannah in one of the parallel universes occupied by Peter Howitt's *Sliding Doors*

where to put ourselves in the kaleidoscope of scenes. Om Puri's Parvez makes it easy to adopt his point of view. Warmth and humour radiate from this amiable, easy-going man, trapped between his own idealised vision of British life, conflicting family pressures and the growing surge of his own feelings. The Australian actress Rachel Griffiths, best known from *Muriel's Wedding*, also helps to focus the film, and makes Bettina far more than the stereotyped tart with a heart.

Production values are modest, but the film as a whole has enough meaty substance to ensure it lingers in the mind. And if you see it in London at the Gate Notting Hill you get a bonus: a neatly turned British short, *Bicycle Thieves*, written by Blake Morrison and directed by Susanna White, about a father's obsession with the theft of his son's bike.

Elsewhere in town, at the ICA and Lux cinemas, the first

Pan-Asian Film Festival offers ten days of films from Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand and the Philippines. There are lively tales of teenage prostitution, futuristic gangsters, mermaids, killer butterflies and Bangkok karaoke bars. At their best the films combine their exploration of Asian society with an adventurous use of cinema's tools.

Audiences around the country are slightly less lucky: they get *Scream 2*, the sequel to

Wes Craven's post-modern slasher movie; shooting began just six months after the original opened in cinemas.

Cast members return; so does the hooded figure in the ghost mask who loves to taunt and slash college students to ribbons. So does the talk about horror movie formulae. "Carnage candy, your audience just expects it," says film nerd Randy, now enrolled, with Neve Campbell's heroine Sidney, at a leafy college in the

Midwest. "By definition alone, they're inferior films."

The reference is to sequels, and for some of the time Craven and his scriptwriter Kevin Williamson make the definition come true by stringing together the same scares, the same jokes. Novelty is lost. You still have to admire the ingenious way Craven packages his carnage candy. The first stabbings occur at a cinema preview of an imagined Hollywood retreat of the

events seen in *Scream*, based on a book by the tabloid journalist character played by Courtney Cox. Everything takes place in the media spotlight; everyone is aware of the rules of the game, which allows the finger of guilt to rove widely among the cast. Knowingness, however, is no proper substitute for straight, robust plotting and, for all the film's passing delights, two hours is a long time to spend in its company.

CLOSER

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PATRICK MARBER

"WILL COME TO BE SEEN AS ONE OF THE KEY PLAYS OF THE 1990's"

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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SNAP VERDICT

'Highly original'

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

SLIDING DOORS
Leslie Isaiah Thomas, 20: Peter Howitt should be very proud of his directorial debut. A highly original movie. Dom Young, 19: Gwyneth Paltrow and John Hannah are both great. Don't miss it. Tim Thornton, 21: An excellent feel-good British comedy with marvellous performances from the two leads. I'm sure this film will bring in the dough for *Bread's* Howitt. Damian Saunders, 20: It's a shame when the best thing in a British film is the American star.

BREAKDOWN
Leslie: Competently directed, but the story and the dialogue are not the most imaginative. Dom: It will keep you on the edge of your seat. Tim: American scrap. You'll end up with a nervous breakdown. Damian: Very disappointing action thriller.

SCREAM 2
Leslie: The body count is sickeningly high. I can't recommend this film. Dom: Courtney Cox is a fox! The movie didn't frighten me, it just made me laugh. Tim: The best horror film I've ever seen. Damian: Cox and friends re-

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TOTAL FILM

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S C R E A M

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42 ARTS THEATRE

LONDON

CELEBRATING HANDEL. A unique musical event takes place tonight at the Barbican...

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Martin Hargie

Northcott Theatre, Stocker Road (0332 493483). Opens tonight, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Fri, 7.30pm, Sat, 9pm, mats Wed, May 13 and Sat (May 23), 2.30pm. Until May 23.

ELSEWHERE

EMETER, Ron Moody plays the desecrated statue of St Simon in The Canterbury Ghost...

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre in London. Includes sections for 'House full, returns only', 'Some seats available', 'Seats at all prices'.

LONDON GALLERIES

British: Rupa Makrye. A decade of art, 1987-1997 (0171-323 5230). Goethe Institute: Berlin. Photographs by Gerhard Ullmann (0171-594 0214).

LONG RUNNERS

Blood Brothers: Phoenix (0171-389 1733). Buddy: Strand (0171-930 8000). Cat: New London (0171-429 0073).

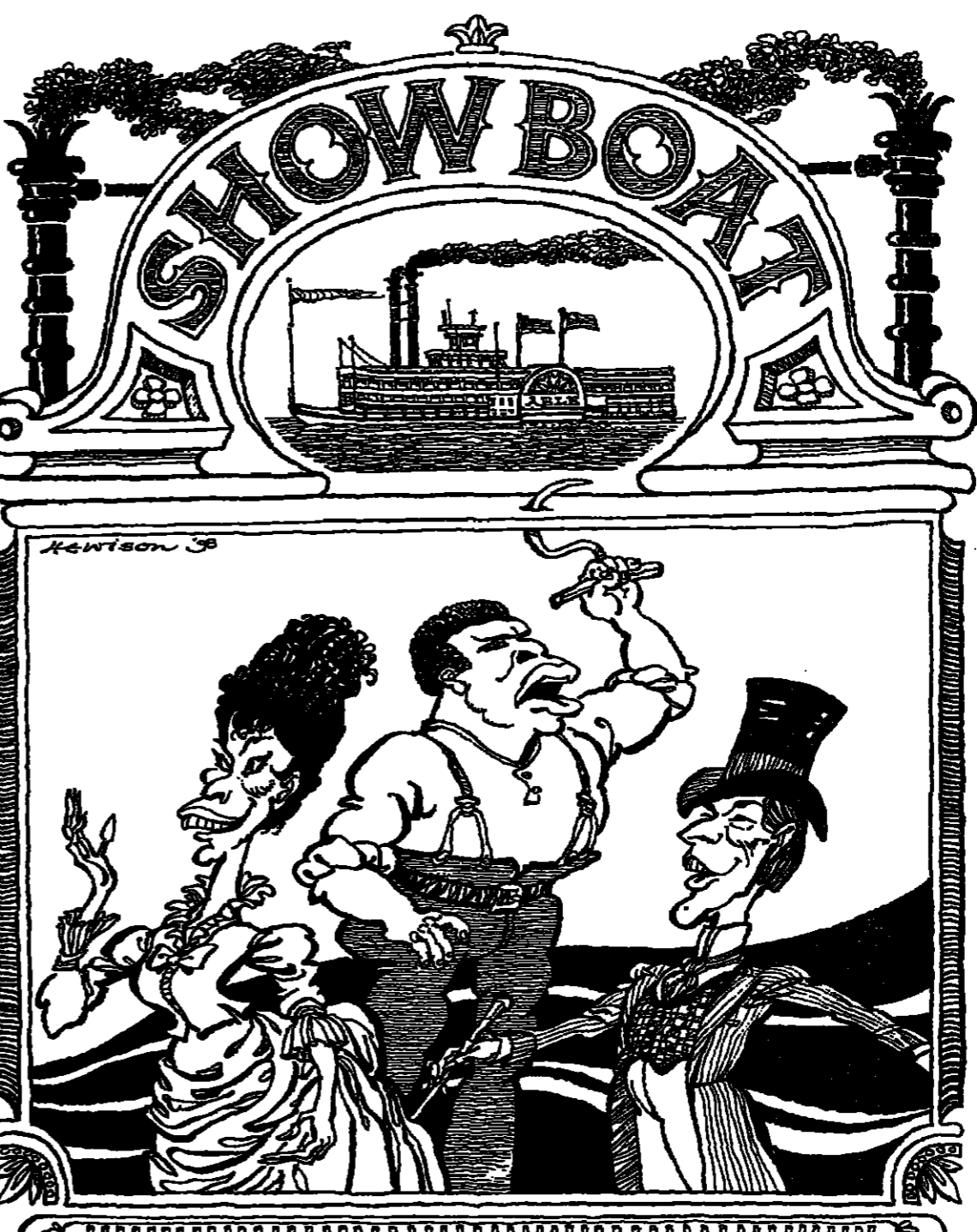
A cruise in shallow waters.

Hasn't the world had enough three-hour sagas about big boats? It appears not.

No sooner has Titanic chugged off with its billion-dollar haul than Harold Prince's staging of Show Boat paddles into the West End...

Show Boat Prince Edward

includes a handsome frock budget. And yes, the show does have one, Of Man River, with lyrics ('I'm tired of living and scared of dying') to chill the spine...



All aboard: Terry Burrell (Julia), Michel Bell (Joe) and Hugh Panaro (Gayford Ravenal) in Show Boat

Blum's rubber-limbed Frank is a feast of shuffle and Charleston, and delighted to behold. As is the way in 1990s musical theatre, the singers are horribly over-amplified - good grief, they aren't playing Hyde Park...

Delicious lies

The movie V-Tol is practised in portraying the thing that is not: false perspective, hidden exits and cheap cinematic tricks...

times three different projections run simultaneously, covering the whole visible surface of the stage. The style ranges from suspiciously edited police interviews to abstract swoops of colour, hinting at violence...

NEW RELEASES

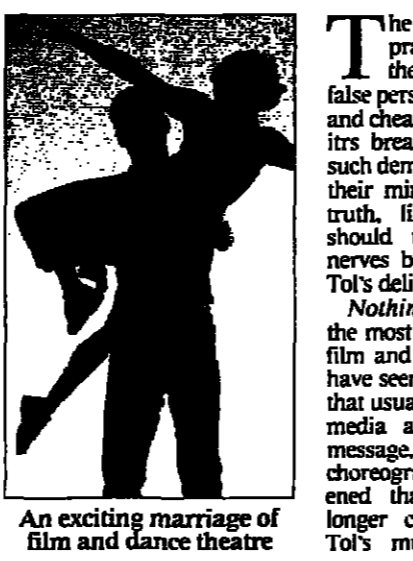
THE BIG LEBOWSKI (18). The Coen brothers' dishevelled spoof of Raymond Chandler's thrillers, very funny in spite of bad jokes...

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol \oplus) on release across the country.

CURRENT

AS GOOD AS IT GETS (15). Obsessive-compulsive Jack Nicholson tries to become a better person.



An exciting marriage of film and dance theatre

ART GALLERIES

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ENTERTAINMENTS

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER. THE MANSFIELD PLAYERS. MAJOR BARBARA.

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Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page, partially cut off, mentioning 'Let's see out the museum mudd' and 'COMEDY THEATRE'.

aters

Let's sort out the museum muddle

Do museums give value for money? We have no way of telling, says Sir Nicholas Goodison, chairman of the National Art Collections Fund

Museums and galleries are an essential part of British culture. And they are popular. A year ago, in the inaugural Franks Lecture at the British Museum, I had an early opportunity to draw the new Government's attention to the plight of museums and galleries. In *A New Era for Museums?* I expressed high hopes that there would now be a more imaginative approach to the funding of the arts. For far too long museums have had to survive through a year-by-year sense of crisis.

Since then, what has the Government done for museums? What has happened to ministers' bold pronouncements on free admission to our national collections? Have museums been beneficiaries of Tony Blair's commitment to "education, education, education", or have they lost out in the re-branding of Britain as a young, go-ahead nation?

In the warm aftermath of the recent Budget announcement that £2 million had been found to keep non-charging national museums free, it is easy to forget what a nail-biting time it has been for museums. The campaign for free admission, with which the National Art Collections Fund was much involved, was fought following a serious wobble by the Government after the election on the issue of free entry. The extra money is a welcome concession. But the fact remains that since the Labour Government came to power two more national museums have been forced to introduce charges: the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside and the National Museum of Scotland.

Let us look closer at that extra £2 million. It has been set aside in a challenge fund. The words are pertinent. To unlock the funding, museums will

have to demonstrate that they are managed efficiently, perhaps by finding matching savings or generating funding from elsewhere. The Government is clearly anxious that publicly funded museums are not only well run, but perceived to be well run. And yet how is the performance of museums assessed? How do taxpayers know that they are getting value for money?

The present system centres on funding agreements between national museums and Government. In the Culture Department's annual report these are described as a "clear encapsulation" of what the Department and its museums regard themselves as trying to secure for the taxpayers.

But when we look at the figures, it is impossible to draw clear comparisons or form any reliable judgment of performance. The Victoria and Albert Museum's grant in 1996-97 represents almost 80 per cent of its total income; the equivalent figure for the Tate Gallery is just under 48 per cent of its total income. The Tate has a policy of free admission; the V&A charges for entry. The National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside's introduction of an entry charge in the form of their "Eight pass" is described as a "key achievement" in the Department's report; yet aside money to maintain free entry at other national museums. How can the taxpayer make sense of this?

Each museum publishes "key performance indicators". There is no consistency between the museums, even though the Department funds such a small number. Not one includes among its key performance indicators a reduction of total costs in proportion to income: is the taxpayer getting good value? Both Merseyside and the Tate single out the



The Roald Dahl Children's Gallery at the Buckinghamshire Museum won a 1997 Gulbenkian Award. Now the museum may be forced to close

WHO FUNDS WHAT IN ENGLAND?

National museums funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport: In London: British Museum, Imperial War Museum, National Gallery, National Maritime Museum, Science Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Natural History Museum, Tate Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, Wallace Collection; plus National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, and Royal Armouries, Leeds

Non-national museums funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport: In London: Geoffrey Museum, Horniman Museum, Museum of London, Sir John Soane's Museum; plus Museums of Science and Industry, Manchester

National museums funded by the Ministry of Defence: RAF Museum, Hendon, National Army Museum, London

Museums funded (indirectly) by the Department for Education and Employment: University collections

percentage of their collections held in environmentally adequate conditions. The figure for Merseyside for 1998-99 is 21 per cent, for the Tate 75 per cent. Why this wide discrepancy? Are there any targets being set by Government?

If the basis of the funding system at national level is baffling, what happens in the regions? Out of approximately 2,500 museums, only 17 are centrally funded (see box). The majority receive funding from local authorities. Amazingly there is no statutory obligation

on English local authorities to provide a museums service, and an optional service is inevitably the first to suffer. Museums have lost out to other community services.

The results have been devastating for civic and community museums. For example, the Bowes museum in County Durham, whose funding way beyond the scope of the new unitary authority, may close for five months each winter. The local authority has even threatened to sell off some of its masterpieces. Then

there is Buckinghamshire Museum, winner of the 1996 Museum of the Year Award. Faced with a cut in its annual grant of 30 per cent with further drastic cuts anticipated. As a result, it has lost not only its director but five vital professional staff as well.

Yet this is the museum whose Roald Dahl's Children's Gallery won the 1997 Gulbenkian Award for Innovation in Museum Education. Now, in the midst of a drive for "education, education, education", the museum faces

potential closure. Where is the national strategy in this?

Up and down the country museums are beset by crises, despite the influx of lottery millions towards capital projects. Glasgow, Sheffield, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Cheshire, Oxfordshire, to name but a few, face a desperate struggle to meet their running costs.

One of our great civic museums, the locally funded Manchester City Art Gallery, has had its grant to buy works of art eliminated. Yet at the same time the Culture Department's annual report lauds the Tate's ability to make landmark acquisitions as a "key achievement".

Clearly we need some consistency and leadership. We urgently need to reform the whole funding system underpinning our museums. The answer must lie in properly worked out funding agreements between museums and Government. At present various quantitative criteria are used for performance assessment: number of visits; number of objects on display; number of objects loaned and so on. But what about qualitative criteria and measurement

of financial performance? Above all, are museums providing the services the public wants? Surely there should be a business-like assessment of the real costs of maintaining, conserving and displaying the core collections.

In the Franks Lecture last year I called for a new compact. The starting point should be a thorough, independent analysis of museums with collections of major significance, to agree objectives and ascertain the minimum core costs required. The museums' side of the compact is to ensure quality management, quality service, accountability, transparency. The Government's side (both national and local authority) is to accept its responsibility for the core minimum costs and guarantee to meet them on a long-term basis.

Only then can we stop lurching from crisis to crisis, and enable museums to take their place in Tony Blair's "Age of Achievement" and respond to his call for "education, education, education". Can we hope that Chris Smith's imminent spending review will be radical enough to set the ball rolling?

Tenor for all seasons

However one responds to the highly individual voice of Ian Bostridge, it is not hard to understand why this singer brought out the "House Fall" signs at the Wigmore Hall on Tuesday. His quintessentially English tenor sound may lack the resonant depth ideal for some German Lieder, but as this Schumann and Wolf programme showed again, he is an uncommonly intelligent interpreter who gets to the heart of the matter.

Indeed, it was the sometimes unbeautiful tension in his voice in *Dichterliebe* that, deliberately or not, stressed the unbearable intensity of Schumann's song cycle. No single performance of such a perfect work can be definitive, yet this one said a lot about the mysteries of love lost and love renewed that the composer and his poet, Heine, explore so truthfully. The pianist Julius Drake was on his best form.

CONCERT

Ian Bostridge
Wigmore Hall

providing alert and lively accompaniments.

Significantly, the voice itself appears to be growing in size and colour. Though he opened the cycle with quiet understatement and later sang *Ich will meine Seele tauchen* with the seamlessness for which he is already renowned, Bostridge also displayed new weight and darker tone: *Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome*, in which the piano evokes Cologne cathedral in an organ-like part, was full of grandeur. There were still moments when the voice was short of body low down, which may partly explain why Bostridge resorts to some almost expressionless pulling around of the notes.

All this, and his seemingly studied stage-manner, mattered little in the context of such insight into both words and music. Schumann worked on *Dichterliebe* straight after setting *Eichendorff*, and so it was near programming to balance this song cycle with most of Wolf's *Eichendorff* songbook. Bostridge caught the quirkiness of *Der Musikant*, wit of *Der Scholar* and strange atmosphere of *Das ständchen*, missing only the exaltation of *Liebesglück*, where *strain* at the top took its toll. Yet this was a memorable performance in which the gallery of soldiers, minstrels and students came vividly to life.

JOHN ALLISON

NEW CLASSICAL CDs: Unusual and exquisite singing; light Maxwell Davies

CHORAL

Hilary Finch

SCHUBERT
Partisongs Vol 5
Die Singphoniker
CPO 999 570-2 *** £14.99

SCHUBERT heralds the month of May with a pair of rarely heard *Motets* settings sung by two dark male voices lit from on high by two horns. This unusual combination of forces is typical of this fifth

and final volume of Die Singphoniker's complete partisongs for male voices, which features not only the distinctive flavour of this six-voice ensemble, but the bouquet of an early piano, a guitar and a string ensemble too.

Die Singphoniker's meticulously researched and rehearsed performances made an outstanding contribution to Schubert year. These partisongs are, after all, at the very heart of Schubert's writing; the best among them rank

with the composer's instrumental chamber music, and they found their way, in his lifetime, from social gatherings and garden parties to public concert performances.

Here, they move from the open-air nocturnal, *Nachtgesang im Walde*, with its echoing horns, to a magnificent grand finale, Schubert's fifth and last setting of Goethe's *Das Mädchen von der Wasser*, for eight voices and five stringed instruments. In between come curiosities like the fond and sometimes tongue-in-cheek tribute to Salieri, Schubert's musical "Grosspapa", and *Die Advokaten*, a charade for a new year's party in which two tenors, bass and piano untangle the niceties of setting legal expenses over a glass of two of Tokay.

RECITAL

John Higgins

ANGELA GHEORGHIU
My World
Decca 458 360-2 *** £15.49

ONE of the photographs in Decca's neat accompanying booklet shows Angela Gheorghiu with her arm around the globe. Her musical world is extensive, covering 16 countries in the original language. Better still it is imaginative. Just when the listener is settling down to the familiar and comfortable sounds of *Plaisir d'amour* or *Solveig's Song* (especially good), Gheorghiu pulls you up with a totally unfamiliar piece from a none too familiar land. Clever programming, apparently abetted by her excellent pianist, Malcolm Marineau.

Gheorghiu's excursions into Austro-German lieder are not going to set the torches blazing, but elsewhere the pleasures are multiple. Top of the list comes a French trio (Satie, Debussy, Poulenc) and three songs from her native Romania. This is exquisite singing; the old cultural ties between the two countries are rightly maintained in Gheorghiu's

hands. Other items from Eastern Europe display her rapidly maturing lower register, especially a sentimental number by Hadjidakis.

Two countries are notably absent from the world tour, Britain and Russia. Perhaps they are being reserved for another occasion.

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

MAXWELL DAVIES
Mavis in Las Vegas
Various orchestras/Davies Collins 15242 *** £8.99

THE unlikely title refers to an incident that occurred when Peter Maxwell Davies was on tour in Casino City in 1995. His presence was denied to an inquiring British journalist, but only because his name had been contracted in the hotel register to "Mavis". Davies relished the joke and produced a hugely enjoyable theme and variations charting Mavis's glitzy adventures in the city.

This is the lighter, parody-prone side of Maxwell Davies, and it recurs, in slightly different form, in the other recent pieces on this disc. *A Spell for Green Corn* and *Carolinista* both weave in Scottish folk tunes to rather moving effect, while *An Orkney Wedding* depicts inebriated nuptials. The *Ojai Festival Overture* affectionately imitates the expansive sonorities of Aaron Copland.

The "Mavis" piece is newly recorded, the others compiled from existing discs involving the RPO, the BBC Philharmonic and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. An ideal introduction to the more entertaining side of this composer.

* Worth hearing
** Worth considering
*** Worth buying

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498.

Hey, let's clean those stables

HERCULES

Disney, U, 1997

HE MAY be Hercules in the annals of Greek myth, but to Disney animators he's simply Herc, the kind of guy you might find surfing off the California coast. Brought up on earth, Herc needs to prove his mettle to reclaim his perch on Mount Olympus. Hades (splendidly voiced by James Woods) is out to stop him, and sends a sexy siren to trip him up. Alan Menken's songs lack originality, but the film, which employed cartoonist Gerald Scarfe as production designer, bounces along with a speed and style geared to modern youth. Aside from Woods's sardonic villain, Danny DeVito puts his own stamp on the character of Phil, satyr and sidekick.

THE ADDICTION

Fox World Cinema, 18, 1995
MEMORABLE and inventive vampire tale from director Abel Ferrara, featuring Lili Taylor as a New York University PhD student who prowls a



Muscle man: the cartoon Hercules struts his stuff

NEW ON VIDEO

Greenwich Village drained of light and colour, puncturing vagrant and academic alike. To prove the heroine's intellectual credentials, there are references to Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, plus visual reminders of the My Lai massacre and the Holocaust. Glibly provocative? Maybe. But the film is shot with real low-budget panache, and gives a real feeling of what being undead entails. It is also darkly funny, particularly when Christopher Walken's vampire appears for some wise words and a smack.

SHOCK CORRIDOR

Tartan, 15, 1993

THE punchy, tabloid style of director Samuel Fuller is shown in full glory in this powerful and unsettling melodrama about a newspaper journalist (Peter Breck) who fakes madness to unmask a murderer in an asylum, only to go mad himself. Inventive photography by Stanley Cortez, photographer of *The Magnificent Ambersons*. *The Naked Kiss*, Fuller's drama about a prostitute, made in the same year and another cocktail of sensationalism and honest outrage, is also available.

VOLCANO

Fox Pathe, 12, 1997

FIREBALLS hurtle across LA's skies. Ash covers tourist monuments. Lava races down streets and tunnels. The population panics in a noisy babble, though one line of dialogue emerges clearly: "Oh my God!" Striding through the chaos come Tommy Lee Jones, leading light in LA's Office of Emergency Management, and seismologist Anne Heche always brave, selfless and efficient. Twenty years ago, this kind of movie never pretended to be anything but hokum, and was always entertaining. Now the film-makers

believe their own clichés, which drains some fun from the game. Awesome special effects, though. Available to rent.

PUSHER

Metrodome, 15, 1996

IMPRESSIVE and gritty Danish thriller about seven days in the life of a drugs pusher. He

starts off cocky and successful; he ends desperately chasing debts to save himself from the mortuary table. The hand-held camera lurches from face to face, a trick that can often seem tiresome. But young, first-time director Nicolas Winding Refn (a name to watch) makes it work, and vividly captures the Copenhagen underworld scene.

GEOFF BROWN

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I SHALL WE DANCE?

One of the most popular foreign language films of all time.

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AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

No hero, Heidegger: Roger Scruton calls time

Not very good at being in the world

Heidegger must be the luckiest of modern intellectuals. Incapable of writing lucidly, he invented an inimitable species of obscurity which was widely received as the authentic voice of philosophy in a godless world. A timid professor, who dared nothing and lived the narrowest of bourgeois lives, he nevertheless created around himself an aura of adventure and risk, so as to become, in the eyes of his following, a heroic and prophetic figure, who could demand and receive whatever loyalty seemed useful to him.

Even his one venture into politics — his notorious spell as a Nazi activist and apologist — was forgiven him. He died peacefully, comfortably, after a pampered and risk-free life, revered all over the world as the deepest of modern metaphysicians. And yet the whole persona was a fake.

That judgment is mine, not Safranski's, and it reflects my education, in a Cambridge where analytical rigour took precedence over all other intellectual virtues, and where Heidegger was not so much famous as notorious for his "Question of Being". When all is said and done, the question seems little more than a bombastic version of "What's it all about then, guv?" and the answer no more helpful than "Hurry up please, it's Time". The meaning of Being is Time, in other words to be is to be around for a while, which is hardly surprising. Later Heidegger searched for a more concrete style and for problems that would be recognisable outside of his philosophy. But even in 1945 he writes: "Let us have the courage for the direct word: Being is the trembling of Godding," a phrase which makes you wonder what the indirect word might be.

Safranski accepts Heidegger on his own valuation, as the last great voice of German philosophy, in whose writings is played out, in shadowy form, the spiritual drama of our epoch. He does not offer excuses for the Nazi involvement. It is impossible to deny the extent of it, or the mendacity of Heidegger's subsequent apology. Nor does Safranski slavishly reproduce the Heideggerian jargon, as most commentators do, as a shield for his own unthinkingness. He is a genuine, sincere, and thoughtful writer, who has been profoundly affected by Heidegger's ideas, and deeply distressed by the second rate life which produced them.

For the British or American reader Safranski's book is especially interesting as a

piece of intellectual history. Setting Heidegger in the context of German philosophy, you will interpret him as a phenomenologist, who endeavours to describe the stages of consciousness as it lights upon the world. Setting him, as Safranski does, in the context of the Weimar years, at the heart of a peculiarly nihilistic and life-hating culture, you will find quite another meaning in the "Nothing" that "noths" and the "Dasein" which veers through anxiety, inauthenticity and care towards "Being-towards-death".

Seeing the Heideggerian concepts not as philosophical universals, but as the expression of a cultural and spiritual predicament unique to a place and a time, you begin to understand them more concretely. Being-towards-death is about to leap exultantly forth into reality — but with the death of others, rather than death of its own, as its goal. Study the prewar writings of Ernst Jünger and Bertholt Brecht and the paintings and caricatures of Georg Grosz and you will not be surprised at the terrible events which were about to erupt in Germany. Safranski gave me the same feeling about the prewar writings of Heidegger — with the exception of the wonderful essay on Hölderlin, in which the philosopher humbly recognises that another and greater writer has preempted his words.

What should be our attitude, now, to Heidegger's Nazism? It is worth pointing out that Heidegger's communism, or Sartre's revolutionary nihilism, in general, 20th-century intellectuals have regarded murder, genocide and the ruin of human hopes as excellent or at worst forgivable things when accompanied by the right noises. Had Hitler conducted his revolution as Lenin did, in the name of equality and liberation, and used class rather than race as the criterion for eliminating his victims, he would have got away with it, and Heidegger's spasm of revolutionary fervour would awaken now no more condemnation than Sartre's or Brecht's. But this would not alter the fact that they were all three of them despicable, and wonderful proof to us, who live in more peaceful times, of the futility of human thinking when the real choice between good and evil must be made.

Heidegger's durability leads me to doubt my own negative judgment. Safranski earnestly searches these dark writings for their secret: he does not find it, but, listening with Safranski's ears in the catacombs I could hear, from time to time, a distant human cry.

MARTIN HEIDEGGER
By Rudiger Safranski
Translated by Ewald Osers
Harvard University Press
£23.50
ISBN 0 674 38709 0



Heidegger: a risk-free life

Year that changed us

Brian MacArthur
1968
Marching in the Streets
By Tariq Ali
and Susan Watkins
Bloomsbury, £20
ISBN 0 7475 3763 1

The Paris riots, the Prague spring, Grosvenor Square, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the birth of the Che Guevara legend, above all Vietnam — as Tariq Ali says in this glossy chronicle of the dramatic events of 1968, it was a year that those who lived through it will never forget, when student power crippled one president (Lyndon Baines Johnson) and nearly toppled another (Charles de Gaulle).

Thirty years on, as Ali recalls, the questions that the students were asking in 1968 seem so simple. Why should the state regulate personal life? Why were women denied equal status with men? Why were university courses so outdated? The problem was that the older generation of presidents ruling nations and universities did not, could not, would not listen. Even liberal university presidents seemed incapable of comprehending what the students were saying. When the students were ignored their questions got more serious — particularly over the bombing of the people of Vietnam with napalm — and they took to the streets.



Riot police storm a cobblestone barricade near the Sorbonne in Paris; "de Gaulle assassin", the students cried

Seen through the prism of the intervening years of Reagan and Thatcher, the events of 1968 seem so violent and so long ago. Did they achieve anything of lasting significance? Ali makes a good case that they did, arguing that defeat in Vietnam has made the United States reluctant to intervene directly in

other continents, that the May events are part of France's collective memory and that the Soviet Union's decision to crush socialism with a human face in Czechoslovakia was the death-knell of the Soviet system.

As he looks back now, Ali contrasts the MTV generation's cocaine-induced variety

of happiness with the joy the 1968 students experienced in helping to change history. Politics beats pot, as they will learn from this eloquent collection of dispatches from the barricades or from David Caute's earlier account of 1968. Those who quarrel with Ali's analysis of the "profound melancholy" at the core of contem-

porary capitalism ought nevertheless to agree with him that a culture that lacks the intransigent heretics and restless romantics who manned the barricades in 1968 is doomed to dull mediocrity.

Brian MacArthur was education correspondent for The Times, 1967-70.

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- Book your visit in advance by telephone with one of the centres listed in the supplement and attach four differently numbered tokens from The Times to the coupon below.
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- A total of 13 tokens and five coupons will be printed in The Times until Saturday May 9, enabling you to try as many as three different activities if you wish.



TENNIS
The Lawn Tennis Association, Membership Department, The Queen's Club, Palliser Rd, London W14 9EG. Offer: 25 per cent discount on membership. Junior (12-17yrs) £11.25 (£15), Adult (18+) £18.75 (£29), Family (up to 4) £26.25 (£39). Includes free monthly copies of Ace, Britain's biggest tennis magazine, worth £27.50, plus British Tennis magazine, a free LTA raffle to enter LTA tournaments, a free tournament guide, worth £3, exclusive Wimbledon ticket ballot, entry into LTA restaurant at Wimbledon, discounts on equipment and clothing, plus many other benefits. For further information on membership, call 0177-381 7037.

MOUNTAIN BIING
Red Kite, Nonsuch Arms, Powys. Tel: 01596 10236. Offer: £38.50 (£76), includes two nights' accommodation and two days' bike hire with maps. Group offer: £85 for ten people plus FREE guide (£260). High Trail, Edale House, Peak District. Tel: 0433 670 339. Experienced bikers offer: £53.50 pp (£65), based on two people sharing a room for two nights, includes two days' biking, 8.5hrs afternoon tea, maps and biking magazines. Beginners offer (group): £62 pp (£82), one days' biking, two nights bike, experienced tutor and guide and hire of bike. Valid for four or more people.

RAFTING
The British Rafting Association send four tokens and coupon per group to Steven Hadden BRA c/o 12 Clyde Street, Cradley Heath, Walsley, West Midlands B64 6DQ, for a list of participating teams, events and dates. Group offer: 50% off all events with FREE club membership. Four-man team £10-£18 per event (£20-£38). Ten-man team £26-£37.50 per event (£50-£75).

Model for Diana the hunted

There's always a modest market for books about dead minor royalty: somewhere behind dead cricketers but in front of dead film stars. But whenever I glimpse the cover of a book about a dead minor female royal, in particular, I think of Patrick Hamilton's besotted Mrs Joan Plumleigh-Bruce who, in the eyes of her besotted Reading snog-bar admirers, "knew History — an important branch of Knowledge. Therefore she was 'clever'. She read History because she was 'clever' and she was 'clever' because she read History. She had a 'brain'. She was, then, for a woman, most unusual." In fact, all Mrs P-B reads are books about Marie Antoinette, which confirm her prejudices about the rule of the common people she despises.

It is sobering for us to think that in a hundred years' time the Mrs Plumleigh-Bruces of this world will be lapping up baroque biogs of Princess Michael of Kent and Princess Caroline of Monaco, but even more sobering to think that perfectly proficient and educated historians will be writing them. Though conveniently, they will come with ready built-in selling points — Nazi and film star parentage respectively — rather than the rather tedious, tortuous selling point Andrew Sinclair lands poor Elisabeth with: that she was Just Like Diana.

The resemblances are there, of course — unhappy marriage, eating disorders, exercise bore, restless traveller, big heart and violent carly death — but judging by the photographs the Empress bore a distinct likeness to the young actress Susan Tully, the sultry and unimpeachably proletarian Michelle of EastEnders, which just goes to show how little effect breeding really has on physiognomy. This is an elegant and poignant book — in the first chapter we are grabbed by the

Julie Burchill
DEATH BY FAME
A Life of Elisabeth, Empress of Austria
By Andrew Sinclair
Constable, £16.99
ISBN 0 09 478060 9



Resemblances? Elisabeth and Diana

haunting image of Elisabeth's father banished by his wife to a distant wing of their huge Munich palace, his children only ever knowing if he is at home by his faraway whistling. But after just a couple of chapters you find your mind wandering to other spirited, frustrated and doomed aristocratic women, such as Henrietta Maria or Margaret Rose, and you know you've heard it all before. To be a spirited, frustrated and doomed aristocratic woman is not a fascinating deviation, but rather what comes with the territory. For the women of the ruling class are the most truly emotionally if not economically oppressed; if Having It All has come to mean the right for a woman to have both a family life and paid employment then ruling class women have always Had Nothing. Forbidden to work lest their husbands appear unable to

support them yet unable to immerse themselves in family life due to the brace of vicious aristocratic habits of sending children to boarding school while still thumb-suckers and of husbands keeping wives to breed and mistresses to love, they truly remain an emotional underclass. Even the Duchess of Kent, the former Katharine Worsley, whom we believed to be the most tranquil and contented of the lot, is a long-term depressive.

Freud said that people need work and love in order to be happy; the aristocratic woman has less chance than any member of society apart from the criminal or the insane of finding either — the exception being actual female sovereigns, who are allowed to be as stropic and work as hard as they like, and so end up tremendously focused and robust.

This is a sad story, but nothing new. Andrew Sinclair seems aware of this, and in the final chapter, which draws parallels between the lives of Elisabeth and Diana, has what can only be described as a hissy fit as he mounts an ill-humoured and inaccurate attack on The Man Who Dared: Andrew Morton. The work of the mild-mannered superhero is written off as "trivial" and "meretricious": Diana herself slumped posthumously on the wrists for *haunting her beauty and compassion* instead of keeping modestly under her veil and parasol, "her shields from the photographer and the voyeur", as Elisabeth did.

Well, a lot of good her modesty did her, and in the end she was knifed to death by an anarchist in Geneva. A tragic ending to a sumptuous story which will, once more, confirm the worst prejudices of Mrs Plumleigh-Bruce and her chums as to the morals of the mob.

Julie Burchill's biography of Diana, Princess of Wales, will be published by Weidenfeld in June.

TOMORROW: 4x4, SINGLE-SEATER RACING, CLASSIC CAR AND TANK DRIVING

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3. Which National Sunday Newspapers do you buy (at least once a week)?

4. Which National Sunday Newspapers do you buy (at least once a week)?

THE TIMES ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES
TOKEN 5

Dreams can make monsters

Nigel Cliff
DREAM CHILDREN
By A. N. Wilson
John Murray, £13.99
ISBN 0 7195 5762 3

Where Nabokov's Humbert Humbert fails to convince even himself of the rightfulness of his actions, Gold is unrepentant to the end. Where the earlier work subverts Humbert's claim to be at Lolita's mercy, *Dream Children* does not even raise the question of power: we are

al resolution is contrived; and it takes the time to establish Gold in the respectable world of academia.

But *Dream Children* finally fails to convince. It lacks conviction as a sustained account of the pathology of its central character — hinting rather perfunctorily that his abuse as a child by his step-mother and a bungled adult sexual encounter may be responsible for his predilections does not a case-history make. The novel touches on numerous contentious issues such as recovered memory, but fails to explore them in depth. Regrettably, it also has the distinct air of being hastily written — in the odd plot error and in many small instances of awkward phrasing — which, given the seriousness of its subject, is more than usually hard to forgive.

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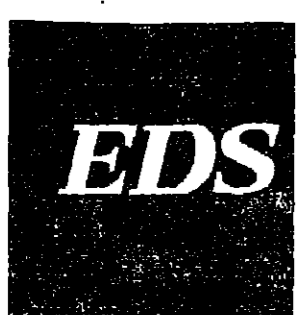
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PRESS

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FLORA LONDON MARATHON

Runners up to 4 hours, 57 minutes, 51 secs



The Times continues today its exclusive coverage of the results of last Sunday's Flora London Marathon. So far we have published 23,276 of the finishers names. Tomorrow we will carry the remaining results which have been provided by EDS, official suppliers of computers to the race.

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Court of Appeal

Law Report April 30 1998

Employer held retentions in trust Order should specify time limit

P. C. Harrington Contractors Ltd v Copartnership Developments Ltd and Another

Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Morritt and Lord Justice Robert Walker

loss to the employer was certified by the architects to amount to £659,672.

The employer then held a retention fund amounting to £288,166 which included the £22,695 now claimed by the works contractor.

might be regarded as "moneys due or to become due to the management contractor".

Although the management contract and the works contract were both detailed and complicated the overall effect was, in his Lordship's view, clear.

Clive Brooks and Co Ltd v Baynard and Others

Before Lord Justice Roch, Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Otton

provide security, once he knew that he would be unable to comply with the order, came under an obligation to inform the other side that he was in no position to continue proceedings.

An order for security for costs in that form gave the party ordered to provide security a reasonable period in which to do so and after such a period had elapsed, the defendant became entitled to have the action dismissed.

Their applications for substitution were made before the defendant's application to strike out the company's action and were based on a valid assignment of the company's rights against the defendants.

LORD JUSTICE MILLETT observed that the order for security for costs was drawn in an unfortunate form. It provided no time limit within which the security was to be given, and although it stayed the action in the meantime it did not provide that the action should be dismissed if security was not given.

His Lordship would invite the Senior Queen's Bench Master or Supreme Court Practice Committee as appropriate to consider the desirability of amending the Queen's Bench masters' practice form.

LORD JUSTICE OTTON agreed. Solicitors: Whitehead Woodward & Co, Blackpool; Cuddy Woods & Co, Blackpool.

Equity will not intervene where contractual remedy available

Box and Others v Barclays Bank plc

Before Mr Justice Ferris

Equity will not intervene where a contractual remedy is available. In his Lordship's view, the illegality consisting of the taking of deposits by a person who conducted an unlicensed deposit-taking business constituted a special kind of illegality which did not bring in its train the ordinary consequences of illegality at common law.

That was achieved by means of section 3(3) of the 1987 Act, which left the ordinary contractual remedies of the deposit of money intact. It was unnecessary in those circumstances to seek an alternative remedy in equity. Indeed to do so would go against the very terms of section 3(3).

It was not suggested that there would be a remedy in equity were it not for the illegality consisting of the contravention of section 3(1). But if that contravention gave rise to an equitable remedy where none would otherwise exist that would affect the civil liability arising in respect of the deposit by giving that new remedy. Section 3(3) expressly negated that.

Solicitors: Epstein Grouer & Michael Freeman; Salians Herzfeld & Heilbrunn HTK.

Golfer liable for shot that went wrong

Pearson v Lightning

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Otton and Sir Christopher Slade

A golfer whose ball bounced off a tree and hit another player on an adjacent fairway, striking him in the eye, was liable for damages because in the circumstances it was foreseeable that the plaintiff might be injured if the difficult shot the defendant was playing went wrong.

The fairways were separated by a 15-metre width of light rough with a number of bushes and trees in it. Both parties were members of the club.

The defendant argued that the judge was wrong to find that in playing that shot there was a real risk of injury to the plaintiff as opposed to a mere possibility.

His Lordship rejected the submission that the finding of liability against the defendant was not properly open to the judge on the facts.

Solicitors: Payne Marsh Stillwell, Southampton; Woolgar & Co, Southampton.

ball on to the plaintiff on the ninth fairway was foreseeable.

That was sufficient to establish a duty owed to the plaintiff, and a breach of it by the defendant. The risk of injury was not so remote that a reasonable person would not have anticipated it.

Given that the defendant was using the plaintiff's section of the rough rather than his own, he should have called to the players on the ninth fairway asking whether they preferred him to play on or wait until they had safety passed.

That would have been courteous and would have alerted them to the need to watch out. The risk the defendant took was small but sufficient to render him liable.

Solicitors: Payne Marsh Stillwell, Southampton; Woolgar & Co, Southampton.

FLORA LONDON MARATHON

Table listing marathon runners with names, bib numbers, and times. Includes names like P. Gough, J. Coleman, C. Hemmings, and many others.

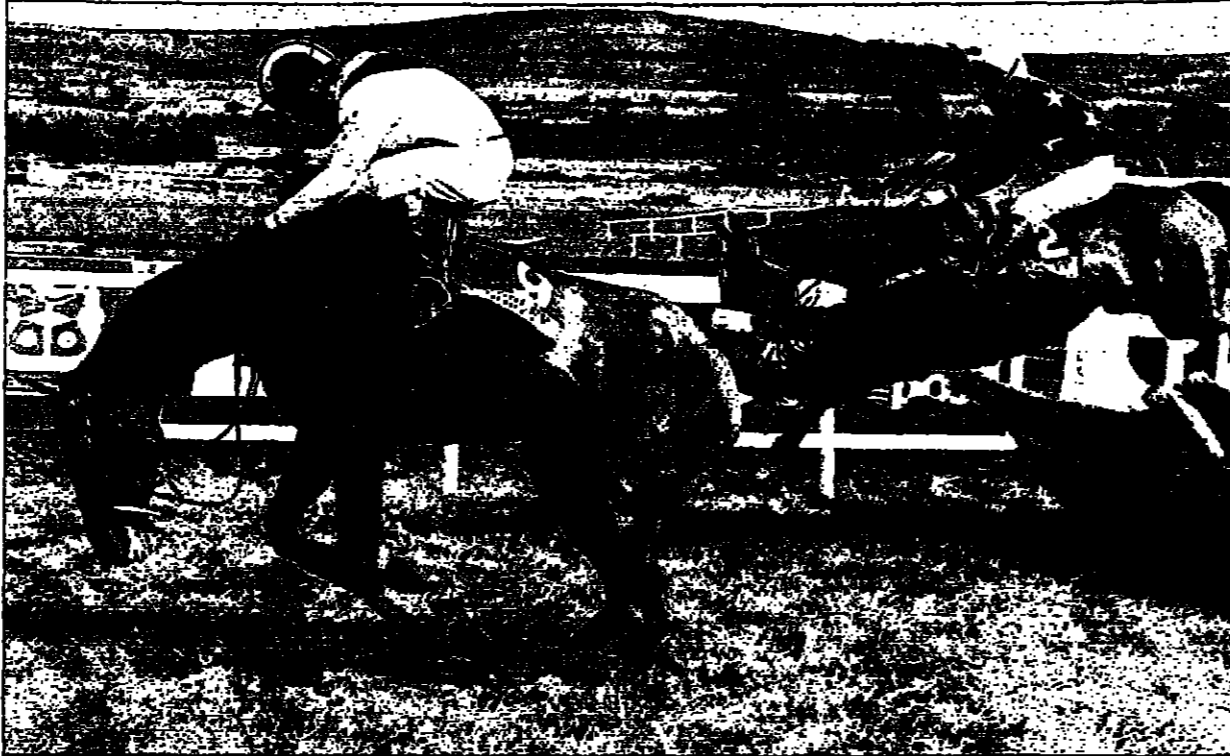
Advertisement for 'Well' products, including 'Well' brand items and contact information.

Handwritten text: 'سكزا من الاصل'

RACING: TRAINER HANGS ON GRIMLY AS PUNCHSTOWN WINNER EXITS STAGE

Foley takes lead role in drag act

FROM CHRIS McGRATH AT PUNCHSTOWN



Ballygowan Beauty, far side, takes advantage of Generosa's mistake to win at Punchestown yesterday

YESTERDAY was Ladies' Day at the Punchestown Festival but, by the time they emerged from the car park...

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: Arcevia (3:30 Brighton)

Arcevia made a most encouraging debut in a fast-run Epsom maiden eight days ago.

unblemished cream dress was as much a tribute to her courage as to her sense of fashion, as she must have reached the podium by parachute.

The most expedient fashion accessory proved to be the plastic frags in which some racegoers were observed picking their way from their vehicles.

As he would readily acknowledge, there could be few less appropriate winners of the Brown Thomas race than

Tom Foley, trainer of As Royal, Foley, whose determined lack of airs so embellished the Danoli facelift...

The racecard's succinct comment on the winner was: "Pulled up at Aintree but right good form previously."

Michael Hourigan's view of this comedy may remain the subject of conjecture...

suited by the way he was hidden at Aintree. Another Dorans Pride? Well, he's crying out for fences, anyway.

Reflected glory from more illustrious stablemates was again the theme when Native Darrig gained due reward for an industrious season in the Evening Herald Handicap Hurdle.

would go to Leopardstown at Christmas and again for the Hennessy Gold Cup. Then it's Cheltenham.

"The day was rounded off by a British success, King's Rod showing tremendous tenacity to land the Doncaster Sales Jack White Champion Bumper."

RED CAR

Table listing Red Car events including Thunderer, Middlesbrough Tyas Maiden Auction, and Manxton Apprentices Maiden Handicap.

WOLVERHAMPTON

Table listing Wolverhampton events including Thunderer, Sloan's Maiden Auction Stakes, and Grosvenor Amateur Riders Claiming Stakes.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Large table of race results for various tracks including Plumpton, Exeter, and Brighton.

BRIGHTON

Table of Brighton race results including 2:00 Velev Jones, 2:30 Saffron Rose, and 3:00 Zibeth.

GUIDE TO OUR RACECARD

Table providing race details for the Brighton card, including race numbers, names, and conditions.

GOING GOOD

Table of race results for the 'Going Good' section, including MANNY BERNSTEIN BOOKMAKERS CLAIMING STAKES.

FORM FOCUS

Table providing form analysis for several horses, including Lady Carlyn and Hollybank.

2.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN CREDIT DIVISION LIMITED STAKES

Table of race results for the 2.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN CREDIT DIVISION LIMITED STAKES.

FORM FOCUS

Table providing form analysis for several horses, including Rich in Love and Hollybank.

3.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP

Table of race results for the 3.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP.

FORM FOCUS

Table providing form analysis for several horses, including Danette Faye and Star's Quest.

THUNDERER

Table of Thunderer race results including 2:00 Velv Jones, 2:30 Saffron Rose, and 3:00 Zibeth.

3.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN MAIDEN STAKES

Table of race results for the 3.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN MAIDEN STAKES.

FORM FOCUS

Table providing form analysis for several horses, including Dandy Regent and Hollybank.

4.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP

Table of race results for the 4.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP.

FORM FOCUS

Table providing form analysis for several horses, including Dandy Regent and Hollybank.

4.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP

Table of race results for the 4.30 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP.

FORM FOCUS

Table providing form analysis for several horses, including Dandy Regent and Hollybank.

5.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP

Table of race results for the 5.00 MANNY BERNSTEIN HANDICAP.

FORM FOCUS

Table providing form analysis for several horses, including Danette Faye and Star's Quest.

Exeter

Table of Exeter race results including 2:00 Chatter, 2:30 Exeter, and 3:00 Exeter.

Cheltenham

Table of Cheltenham race results including 2:00 Cheltenham, 2:30 Cheltenham, and 3:00 Cheltenham.

Cheltenham

Table of Cheltenham race results including 2:00 Cheltenham, 2:30 Cheltenham, and 3:00 Cheltenham.

Kelso

Table of Kelso race results including 2:00 Kelso, 2:30 Kelso, and 3:00 Kelso.

Godolphin ready

GODOLPHIN will begin its 1998 flat campaign with two runners on the opening day of the Guinness Festival meeting at Newmarket tomorrow.

SPECIALISTS

Table of race results for the 'Specialists' section, including Brighton, Redcar, and Wolverhampton.

Cheltenham

Table of Cheltenham race results including 2:00 Cheltenham, 2:30 Cheltenham, and 3:00 Cheltenham.

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4.10 SEDBERGH MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES

Table of race results for the 4.10 SEDBERGH MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES.

4.40 CLIFTON WOOD FILLS HANDICAP

Table of race results for the 4.40 CLIFTON WOOD FILLS HANDICAP.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Table of race results for the 'Course Specialists' section, including Brighton, Redcar, and Wolverhampton.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Table of race results for the 'Course Specialists' section, including Brighton, Redcar, and Wolverhampton.

Large advertisement for Canon Ucs50 and Maxell VHS tapes, featuring a 'VIDEO SCOOP!' headline and various product images.

FOOTBALL: CHAIRMAN TAKES OVER AFTER RESIGNATION OF LOMBARDO

Noades leads new change of the guard at Palace

SUCH has been the chaos at Crystal Palace this season that it would have been no surprise yesterday if they had announced that the caretaker was manager, rather than a new caretaker manager. Instead, after the resignation of Attilio Lombardo, the club revealed that its relegated team would be run until the end of the season by Ron Noades, the club chairman. It will provide a fittingly shambolic end to a shambolic season.

By MATT DICKINSON

firmed that Palace would be relegated to the Nationwide League first division. Lombardo, whose own takeover from Steve Coppell in March was an act of desperation, will play in the club's final three games.

Where he will play will depend on the whims of Noades, who is due to step down as chairman this summer, but now finds himself managing the side for the trip to Bolton Wanderers on Saturday and then home fixtures against West Ham United and Sheffield Wednesday.

Lombardo, the former Juventus player, stepped down yesterday, 48 hours after a 3-0 defeat at home to Manchester United had con-

unable to work properly for more than three months after knee surgery, will jointly run the team but, true to the club's mismanagement this season, he knew nothing about the events of yesterday until he heard about them on the radio.

"I honestly don't know which one of us will be picking the team on Saturday," he said. "Ron rang me to ask me if I would be strong enough to travel to Bolton to watch the team. I said I would. Beyond that, I'm not too sure what the situation is. I've been to watch the last three home games, but

I haven't been able to work at the club since January."

All this has taken place against the backdrop of an attempted £30 million takeover by Mark Goldberg, a Palace director.

Goldberg was originally due to make staggered payments to Noades that would have prolonged the buy-out until December, but he is so determined to speed up the deal that he will put £20 million of shares in MSB International plc, a recruitment company, up for sale on Friday to raise the capital. Goldberg has struck a deal with Terry Venables, the former England coach, to take charge of the team, but that is dependent on the takeover going through.

Noades's decision to assume control will provide a comic end to Palace's sad season. Despite being chairman, he did not even approve the decision to replace Coppell with Lombardo. He was on holiday at the time and revealed this week that he had wanted to bring in Gerry Francis, the former Tottenham Hotspur manager.

Ian Durrant, the Rangers and former Scotland midfielder player, will seek a move to English football at the end of the season after ending his career at Ibrox. Durrant, who made his debut for Rangers as an 18-year-old in 1985, had a testimonial against Sheffield Wednesday on Tuesday.

"I would rather move out of Scotland because I wouldn't fancy coming back here and playing against Rangers," he said. "I think I have missed the boat as far as playing in Europe is concerned. America is still a possibility, but a move down south is another option and that is looking more likely at the moment."

"After the way the boys played last week at Hearts it is hard to see the gaffer changing the team. But I don't think there will be many changes for this Saturday, so it was probably my last appearance at Ibrox. There will be a few tears, but life goes on."



Lombardo tendered his resignation after Palace's relegation was confirmed

Johansson retains high-profile support

FROM ROB HUGHES IN DUBLIN

SOME 25 years ago, Franz Beckenbauer was so imperious a footballer that everyone coveted him. Little changes Beckenbauer is embarrassed today to be the subject of a bizarre tug-of-war that attaches his name in support of both rivals for the Fifa presidential election on June 8.

The German had endorsed Lennart Johansson, the Swedish president of Uefa, the European governing body, as the next Fifa president, by writing a tribute in Johansson's manifesto. However, it was reported this week that Beckenbauer had withdrawn his support and was instead in favour of Sepp Blatter, the Swiss who is general secretary of the world governing body.

Yesterday, at the Uefa congress, the matter was resolved. Egidius Braun, president of the German football federation and treasurer of Uefa, spoke to Beckenbauer by telephone and said that his compatriot had been misinterpreted. "Franz tells me that he said that Blatter is, or was, the best administrator of football in the world," Braun said. "He never implied that Johansson should not be Fifa president. Indeed, Franz is upset that Blatter, whom he regards as a friend, refuses to continue as general secretary under Johansson."

Potentially more divisive was an announcement that Bosnia-Herzegovina is to enter six clubs in a qualification process from which two will emerge to enter Uefa club competitions next season, subject to a final decision by the United Nations Task Force with regard to security.

The winners will go into the Champions' League and the runners-up into the Uefa Cup, but the six will only come from the Muslims, based in Sarajevo, and the Croats, based in Mostar. According to Gerhardt Aigner, the Uefa general secretary, the Serb population, based in Banja Luka, declined to take part for political reasons.

United struggle to shrug off effect of injuries

IT NEVER rains but it pours, even in these balmy spring days. Sheffield United visit Crewe Alexandra this evening with four injuries to add to the six with which they began the week as they search for the victory that will guarantee them a place in the play-offs to win promotion from the Nationwide League first division.

Simon Tracy, the goalkeeper, who looked nervous when he made his first appearance in three months on Tuesday evening in the 3-3 draw with Tranmere Rovers, has a sore shoulder and is a doubt, as are David Holdsworth and Wayne Quinn, the defenders. Nicky Marker, the midfield stalwart, is also considered to be an unlikely starter after he limped about the field at Prenton Park on Tuesday.

"I don't know where we are going to cobble together a team from this time," Steve Thompson, the Sheffield United manager, said, "but we keep putting together scratch sides and we keep getting results, so I am proud of the way the lads have performed. We just need one more push

By DAVID MADDOCK

now. Another win will get us in the play-offs and, with a bit of luck, if we manage that then we will have a few players back."

It has not been the best of weeks for United, who have defied the old cliché by seeing their marathon season distilled to a breathless sprint over the final week. They have been forced to play four games in eight days. The string of injuries is a depressing result.

They are not helped by the fact that Crewe are perhaps the most skilful side in the first division, well able to take advantage of any shortcomings. "It has been a tough week, but there's no use moaning about it now, we just have to get on with it," Thompson said.

Manchester United have won a Uefa ruling in their favour over the transfer of Karel Poborsky to Benfica. The Portuguese club has been given 30 days in which to find the £3 million transfer fee, otherwise the deal will be declared invalid.

United are understood to be trying to sign Frederic Déhu, the Lens midfielder player, who can also fulfil a defensive role. Liverpool have been linked with Godwin Okpara, the Nigeria international, who plays for Strasbourg.

John Gregory, the Aston Villa manager, has given five players whose contracts expire at the end of next season until June 1 to decide on their futures. Gregory has opened talks with Mark Bosnich, Mark Draper, Julian Joachim, Gary Charles and Riccardo Scimeca, whose present deals run out in the summer of 1999, but he said yesterday that he will start looking for replacements if the five players fail to give him a decision.

"The situation I don't want is to go away on my holidays this summer worrying and wondering about having to come back and facing players who haven't signed new deals," Gregory said. "The ones that have been offered new contracts need to take them up or we will start searching for replacements."

WATWICKS... Giles p... BOYMER... from upp... COV... Price to... Contact meddle... BOYMER... price of c...

SATURDAY. ANYTHING BUT A DAY OF REST.

SPORT
Vision
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THE TIMES

سكزا من الأصل

Warwickshire all-rounder produces cup best with both bat and ball Giles puts case for England recall

OLD TRAFFORD (Warwickshire won toss): Warwickshire (2pts) beat Lancashire by 49 runs

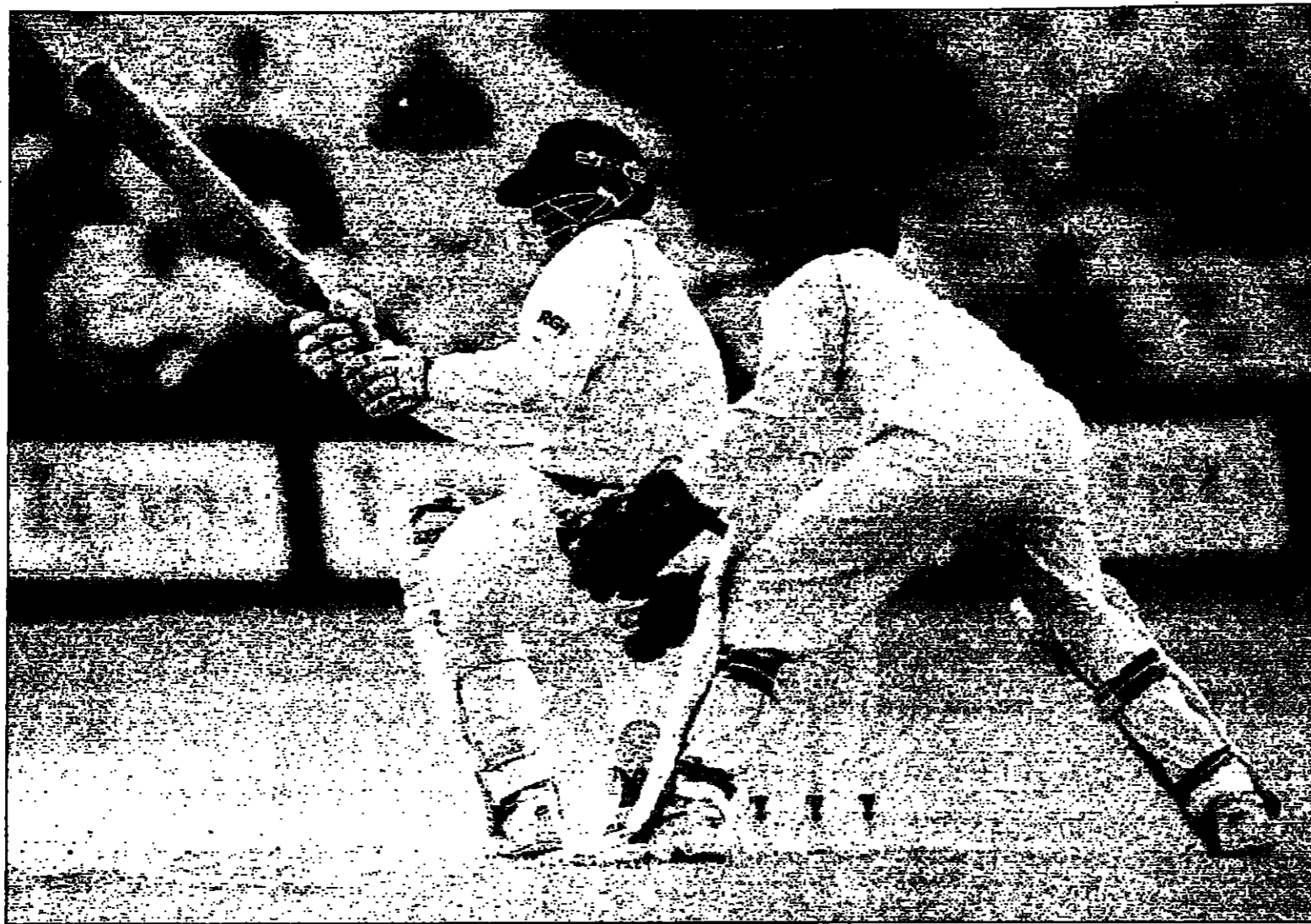
FOR much of the day, and especially when John Crawley was easing his way to a delightful half-century in the afternoon sunshine, it seemed Lancashire would prevail over a Warwickshire side which has come closer in recent years to matching their own fine one-day achievements.

However, three wickets in three overs, beginning with Crawley's, changed the match and, despite game hitting from Wasim Akram, the Lancashire captain, it was the recent upstarts who came out on top.

Fittingly, it was Ashley Giles who provided the coup de grace by bowling Peter Martin with 45 overs to spare. The Surrey-born all-rounder, who played in a one-day international against the Australians last summer but failed to get a game in Sharjah, presented a compelling case for inclusion in the forthcoming Texaco Trophy series against South Africa.

First he shored up a Warwickshire innings that had slumped to 152 for five with a bustling 37 from 38 balls, then he helped half Lancashire's charge by taking three for 22 in his 71 overs of left-arm spin. In both cases it was a career-best in the Benson & Hedges Cup and it earned him his first Gold Award.

And how Warwickshire needed Giles. They did make a good start as Neil Smith and Nick Knight tucked into some wayward bowling from Martin, whose 10 overs cost 60 runs, but once they were out, the innings began to sputter.



Crawley, of Lancashire, plays a sweep on his way to a Benson & Hedges Cup half-century yesterday. Photograph: Laurence Griffiths

ble mix of long handle and quick singles. steered Warwickshire to a total they could defend. Even then, 235 looked well within the compass of a Lancashire team keen to eradicate the memories of 1997, when they failed to reach the quarter-finals of either one-day competition.

Mike Atherton, fighting off a problematic back, produced one confident pull off Ed Giddins but, in the seventh over, he nicked a perfect away-swing to Piper. Crawley, though, was quickly into his stride. He survived one leg-before shout off Dougie Brown before hitting

him for three fours in one over, two clipped through the leg side and one carved through third man.

In the next over, Giles's first, he came dancing down the pitch and struck the spinner straight for another boundary. When Gladstone Small replaced Giddins his first ball was nonchalantly deposited over mid-wicket. It is strange to think that Crawley was deemed surplus to England's one-day requirements in the West Indies.

Crawley raced to his 50 from 53 balls, with six fours and that six, but when Giddins returned to end a

second-wicket partnership worth 82 by bowling Mike Watkinson for 34, the game began to alter. Flintoff went quickly and Crawley was starked of the strike, his next four runs coming from 29 deliveries in nine overs.

Neil Smith then trapped him leg-before and the next two overs saw Small remove Lloyd and Smith get rid of Hegg, caught behind by his opposite number. Wasim was Lancashire's last hope, and he did his best with 31 off 28 balls, but when he was eighth out, caught off a top-edged sweep at Giles, the game was well and truly up.

SCOREBOARD FROM OLD TRAFFORD

WARWICKSHIRE	LANCASHIRE
N V Knight c Chappell... 33	M A Atherton c Piper b Giddins... 11
N M K Smith c Wasim b Martin... 18	M Watkinson b Giddins... 34
D L Kemp c Hegg b Martin... 55	J P Crawley lbw b Small... 54
B G Lara lbw b Austin... 13	A Flintoff lbw b Small... 31
T L Penney c Atherton b Chappell... 17	G D Lloyd c Brown b Small... 16
D R Brown b Wasim... 9	W Aspinall c Giddins b Giles... 31
A F Giles c Watkinson b Wasim... 37	I W K Hegg c Piper b Smith... 0
G Welch c Martin b Chappell... 16	D Austin c Piper b Giles... 5
K J Piper not out... 13	G Yates not out... 5
G C Small not out... 2	P J Martin b Giles... 4
Extras (lb 4, w 11, nb 6)... 21	Extras (lb 15, w 6)... 21
Total (8 wickets, 50 overs)... 234	Total (6 wickets, 49 overs)... 165
E S H Giddins did not bat	FALL OF WICKETS: 1-29, 2-108, 3-110, 4-126, 5-132, 6-134, 7-158, 8-172, 9-179
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-33, 2-75, 3-101, 4-133, 5-151, 6-172, 7-198, 8-224	BOWLING: Wasim Akram 10-0-35-3; Martin 10-0-42; Chappell 10-0-40-3; Austin 10-0-51-1; Yates 10-0-44-0
Gold Award: A F Giles	Umpires: V A Holder and G Sharp.

Woolmer seeks help from upper house

LORD COWDREY of Tonbridge is preparing to give South Africa's cricketers the benefit of his vast experience this summer. It is sought by Bob Woolmer, who was once his protégé and who will coach the touring party.

Lord Cowdrey said that he would be "very happy" to assist his former Kent colleague. "I shall do whatever Bob wants," he said. His first opportunity to meet the South Africans will be on May 17 at Arundel, where he lives, when they play the Duke of Norfolk's XI.

Since he retired from first-class cricket in 1976, Lord Cowdrey, 65, has immersed himself in administration with MCC, of which he was president, the International Cricket Council, which he chaired, and Kent, his old county. Although he has given freely of his time to clubs and societies, no county or country has asked him hitherto to coach them.

Woolmer, who began his career in 1968 under Cowdrey's captaincy, is particularly keen that he should help South Africa's batsmen, who have performed inconsistently of late. "Colin taught me everything I know about batting. He was my boyhood hero and I used to drive with him to matches so that I could ask him about various aspects of the game," Woolmer said. "Sometimes, when I was batting with him, Colin would come down the pitch and suggest trying a different shot against a particular bowler. It would invariably work."

Lord Cowdrey is, himself, seeking assistance from a former England captain. MCC is preparing to update the laws of the game in time for 2000 and, as the chairman of its cricket committee, he is asking Mike Brearley to assist him in reminding captains of their responsibility for the conduct of their players.

"Mike is one of our most astute former captains, level-headed and with an exceptional mind. I am sure that he will have a vital contribution to make to this important debate. We have to establish an acceptable, realistic formula for the conduct of an enjoyable cricket match... competitive, but fun," Lord Cowdrey said.



EXTRA COVER

"Law 42.1 puts the responsibility of the conduct of the match at the door of the captains with their players having to comply. When this happens, the umpire's role is straightforward and, as we have come to expect, when captains fail in their responsibility and the players get out of control, umpires can get embarrassed, even humiliated, because they have by tradition no punitive sanction in their hands whatsoever. Nor, I hasten to add, do they seek one," Cowdrey said.

The judgment of a run at the end of an innings remains a hazardous business. Four Honor Oak batsmen were run out off consecutive balls in the final over of their Abbot Ale Cup match last Sunday. Everything went wrong from an attempt to march the strike to an impetuous slog. Their opponents, Teddington, went through to the second round with some ease.

Price to pay Interest in Geoffrey Boycott memorabilia has waned since a court in France found him guilty of assaulting a former girlfriend. Boycott material even went unsold at recent

Conduct meddle



Boycott fall in price of collectibles

Croft craft unrewarded

CARDIFF (Essex won toss): Glamorgan scored 254 for five wickets against Essex. Match abandoned (1pt each).

WHEN these counties met in the NatWest Trophy semifinal at Chelmsford last August, Robert Croft and Mark Iltott engaged in an undignified shoving match that led to them both being fined £1,000 by their clubs. Yesterday, Croft channelled his aggression in the right direction to put Glamorgan on the way to victory in this Benson and Hedges Cup tie before rain ended proceedings in the 47th over.

Iltott was one of the bowlers to suffer as Croft, reveling in the role of pinch-hitter, struck

77 off 64 balls, including 12 fours, in an opening partnership of 115 in only 20 overs with Steve James.

Croft was helped to a large extent by the ineptitude of the new-ball bowling, which was either too short or too wide or both. It says much for the quality of his strokeplay, though, that neither the prolific James nor the adventurous Matthew Maynard could match him.

It seems that Croft has taken to heart the criticism of his batting technique that he had to endure during the Ashes series last summer. He has worked hard to improve it under the supervision of

Graham Gooch, who had clearly done his old county no favours in his new role as a kind of itinerant batting doctor.

The priority, apparently, was to get Croft into "a more balanced position to face the ball", and he certainly looked that way as he cut and drove lloft, Cowan, Irani and Napier on the way to his highest county score before he was stumped off Grayson's slow left arm.

By then, Essex were more than happy to settle for a point, especially in view of the fact that Waqaar Younis was ready to make his first appearance of the season after returning to Wales in the early hours of the morning.

SCOREBOARD FROM CARDIFF

GLAMORGAN	ESSEX
S P James b Iltott... 71	R J Robinson... 54
R D B Croft c Flintoff b Grayson... 77	D J Capel c Foster b Newman... 15
A Dale run out... 7	J B Rolfe c Roberts b Richardson... 38
M P Maynard run out... 55	M G Bevan b Ramprakash... 36
P A Cooney c Flintoff b Iltott... 7	G P Kettlewell b Newman... 14
G P Butler not out... 13	K Newell not out... 62
I A D Shaw not out... 14	P W James b Johnson... 16
Extras (lb 11, w 3)... 10	R Fonesca c Shah b Wees... 16
Total (5 wickets, 46.2 overs)... 254	J D Lawson b Wees... 3
Waqar Younis, S D Thomas, S L Watson and D A Cooker did not bat.	M A Robinson b Wees... 2
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-116, 2-129, 3-214, 4-227, 5-241	Extras (lb 4, w 4, nb 4)... 12
BOWLING: Iltott 6-2-0-48-2; Cowan 10-0-60-0; Napier 3-0-25-0; Irani 5-3-35-0; Grayson 10-0-32-1; Such 10-0-43-0	FALL OF WICKETS: 1-74, 2-75, 3-78, 4-145, 5-188, 6-217, 7-223, 8-228, 9-277
ESSEX: D J J Robinson, S G Law, N Hussain, R C Irani, S D Peters, A P Grayson, G R Napier, R J Rolfe, M C Iltott, A P Cowan, P M Such	BOWLING: Newman 8-2-18-3; Perrett 10-2-42-3; Flintoff 10-1-55-1; Duffell 10-0-51-0; Richardson 10-1-59-2; Daves 9-0-32-1; Newell 5-0-33-0
Umpires: G Burgess and N Pleves	SUSSEX: C J Adams b Brown b Fonesca... 54
	A D Edwards lbw b Johnson... 20
	G Chappell c Wees b Johnson... 10
	J B Rolfe c Roberts b Newman... 1
	M G Bevan b Ramprakash... 36
	G P Kettlewell b Newman... 14
	K Newell not out... 62
	P W James b Johnson... 16
	R Fonesca c Shah b Wees... 16
	J D Lawson b Wees... 3
	M A Robinson b Wees... 2
	Extras (lb 4, w 4, nb 4)... 12
	Total (10 wickets, 50 overs)... 277
	FALL OF WICKETS: 1-74, 2-75, 3-78, 4-145, 5-188, 6-217, 7-223, 8-228, 9-277
	BOWLING: Newman 8-2-18-3; Perrett 10-2-42-3; Flintoff 10-1-55-1; Duffell 10-0-51-0; Richardson 10-1-59-2; Daves 9-0-32-1; Newell 5-0-33-0
	Umpires: H D Bird and B Leadbeater
	Gold Award: K R Brown

Century by Brown ends long wait for Middlesex

By IVO TENNANT

LORD'S (Sussex won toss): Middlesex (2pts) beat Sussex by six runs

IT IS hard to come to terms with the fact that, until they defeated Sussex yesterday, Middlesex had not beaten a first-class county in the Benson and Hedges Cup for three years.

Their victory in this, the first match of the season at Lord's, was brought about by Keith Brown's first century in this competition, made off 138 balls, and a contribution by Paul Weekes which was almost as worthy.

At this stage of the season, Lord's normally looks a picture. Yesterday, it had the appearance of a tip. The Compton, Edrich and Grand Stands were all closed and the new media centre at the Nursery End appears, in its half-constructed state, hideously intrusive.

There was a greater sense of familiarity on the field, even though there was no Gaiting. Instead, Brown carried the innings. Enthusiasm in finding a middle-order partner in Weekes, who batted as he can rarely have batted before. Brown enabled Middlesex to reach a formidable total.

Indeed, Weekes, who finished with an unbeaten 66, helped Brown to add 120 off 15 overs, including 87 off the last ten. Sussex put Middlesex in and, although Ramprakash was taken at slip after one or two pleasing cover drives, there was little in the pitch for their medium pacers.

The pitch was sited near the Tavern, which benefited the Sussex captain even more than it did Brown. Adams is in terrific form, his self-confidence exuding something to behold. Undaunted by the magnitude of the task, he first advanced down the pitch to Hewitt and cut him for six over cover point. Then he took on Fraser.

A straight six off the England bowler, a stupendous piece of timing, brought him a half-century off 46 balls, one that also included six fours. A swing to leg brought him a seventh, whereupon Fraser had him caught at the wicket. Although Newell struck a half-century off 54 balls, the remainder of the batting fell away.

No one could quibble with Ramprakash's bowling changes, which included bringing on himself. When Johnson replaced Fraser, he had Greenfield taken at slip and then had Edwards leg-before. When the captain came on, he accounted for Bevan and Carpenter.

MIDDLESEX: K R Brown c Turner b Edwards... 114; J Langer b Edwards... 10; M R Ramprakash c Adams b Robinson... 29; G P Kettlewell b Curran b Richardson... 17; O A Shah c Moore b Robinson... 17; P M Walker not out... 16; Extras (lb 5, w 12, nb 10)... 27; Total (6 wickets, 50 overs)... 283; D C Nash; R J Johnson; J P Hewitt; A H C Paine and T B Birtwistle did not bat.

Batsmen lack the practice to cope with Rose

By JOHN STERN

LUTON (Northamptonshire won toss): Northamptonshire (2pts) beat Minor Counties by five wickets

FACING Devon Malcolm and Franklyn Rose in tandem would be a daunting enough prospect for most first-class cricketers at the best of times.

Some of the Minor Counties' part-timers had to do so yesterday in their first match on grass this season, however, a handicap imposed by the wretched April weather.

Not surprisingly, their batsmen struggled against the accuracy and movement of Rose. On his debut in the Benson and Hedges Cup, the Jamaican achieved the best bowling figures by a Northamptonshire player in the competition, beating the five for 21 set by Sarfraz Nawaz at Lord's in 1980. Rose's figures of five for 14 were also the best against Minor Counties since they ceased to play as regional sides in this competition.

Rose bowled straight, pitched the ball up and caused problems with swing and seam. He took the first four wickets to fall in an impressive spell of eight overs and then returned to have Alan Richardson, the last man, caught at slip by Kevin Curran.

The first ball that he bowled to David Ward, the former Surrey batsman now at Hertfordshire, was a beauty that left the batsman late and hit off stump. It left Minor Counties at four for three in the eighth over.

Rose effected the fall of the ninth wicket as well, making a diving stop at fine leg then unleashing an accurate throw that allowed Ripley to run out Phil Nicholson, the Minor Counties wicketkeeper. David Tennant top-scored with a split-diced 26 not out, which enabled Minor Counties to recover from 62 for eight to 103 all out.

Rose, who was listed at No 11 on the scorecard, then appeared again to open the innings. The result was brief but entertaining. He hit a six over long on, but then tried to cut Paul Newman, the 39-year-old former Derbyshire seamer, and was caught at slip by Laurie Potter for 15 made from 14 balls.

When Rob Bailey was bowled by a good one from Pennett, an upset was still on, with Northamptonshire on 39 for four, but Curran and Tony Penberthy ground their way towards the target. The latter posted the victory with a six off Richardson in the 33rd over.

MINOR COUNTIES: S J Dean c Curran b Rose... 0; C J Rogers c Curran b Rose... 0; L Potter b Penberthy... 6; M D West c Curran b Rose... 0; M A Fie c Ripley b Rose... 0; A R Roberts c Ripley b Snape... 25; D J Salter b Curran b Richardson... 14; A P Newnam lbw b Swan... 7; P J Nicholson run out... 15; D B Nevill not out... 14; A Richardson c Curran b Rose... 1; Extras (lb 4, w 6, nb 2)... 12; Total (6 wickets, 46.2 overs)... 103; R R Montgomerie, G P Swann, 10 Rlyer and D B Malcolm did not bat.





CRICKET 53
Warwickshire open
Benson and Hedges
campaign with victory

SPORT

TENNIS 54
Britons slide to
defeat on
Munich clay



THURSDAY APRIL 30 1998

Irish swimmer vows to fight allegations over drug test

Smith protests her innocence



CRAIG LORD

Swimming
Correspondent

MICHELLE SMITH, the triple Olympic swimming champion, yesterday revealed that she stands accused of using a banned substance, described as a derivative of testosterone, to enhance her performance, and of introducing a substance — believed to have been whiskey — into a urine sample that reduced the integrity and validity of a drug test she provided in January.



Smith defends herself yesterday against allegations of using a banned substance and introducing another substance into a urine sample.

Describing the situation as "the most serious challenge to my career and credibility", Smith said: "I am innocent of these charges. I am appalled at the manner in which they have been leaked into the public domain and I intend fully defending them."

Smith and Lennon broadly hinted that her urine sample may have been tampered with by others, and complained bitterly of irregularities in the way Fina had handled the case.

lution". Fina stated. However, it did not mention the banned substance referred to by Lennon.

the laboratory report indicates that she is under suspicion over "the administration of some metabolic precursor of testosterone". She noted that testosterone occurs naturally in the body and only if the ratio exceeds 1:6 does it become illegal. There was no evidence to suggest she had exceeded that level, she said.

(IDTM), the Swedish agency charged with the task of operating Fina's out-of-competition testing programme. A spokeswoman said that while IDTM would not comment on specific cases, "we work in accordance with Fina guidelines in all cases".

Atlanta, had said that Smith's extraordinary progress from mediocrity to megastar was suspicious. Speculation was fuelled by the presence, as Smith's coach and husband, of Erik de Bruin, the former Holland international discus thrower, who was serving a four-year suspension for a failed drugs test.

CROSSWORD puzzle grid with numbers 1-22.

- ACROSS: 1 Supervise exam (10), 8 Word as NATO, laser (7), 9 Cutting tool (5), 10 Hit pace film extract (4), 11 Vacuous waffle (8), 13 Hotel lobby (5), 14 Jape: edible bud shrub (5), 16 Informal interview programme (4-4), 17 Fruit fibre, essence (4), 20 Making good sense (5), 21 Rope: artist (7), 22 Final battle (Revelation) (10).
- DOWN: 1 Son of Abraham (5), 2 Oxbridge contest (7,5), 3 Heredity unit (4), 4 Unwanted furniture (6), 5 Withdraw, recover (4,4), 6 Frustrated, let down (1,2), 7 Shooting star (6), 12 Fighter for cause (8), 13 Capricious (6), 15 Fairground game (4-2), 18 Grey/white wader (5), 19 Penalty: clear, dry (4).

SOLUTION TO NO 1392
ACROSS: 1 Unhelpful 6 Cob 8 Counter 9 Train 10 Item 11 Original 13 Noodle 14 Angler 17 Pedantic 18 Quid 20 Spare 21 Strange 22 Ace 23 Snowballs
DOWN: 1 Unicorn 2 Household name 3 Late 4 Furrow 5 Lligant 6 Channel tunnel 7 Banal 12 Flanders 15 Rodgers 16 Fiasco 17 Pasta 19 Crab

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP
NEW TIMES CROSSWORD TITLES NOW AVAILABLE

Deception an age-old process

COMPETITORS have tried to cheat the drug-testing system for years. Although Michelle Smith yesterday insisted that she was not guilty, some famous international sportsmen and women have been caught in attempting to avoid detection.

In 1978, Michel Pollentier, the Belgian cyclist, was leading the Tour de France when he was discovered at the doping control to be secreting a rubber bag with a tube in his armpit under his jersey. It was found to contain untainted urine. Pollentier was stripped of first place.

found that the samples did not contain any prohibited drugs but had all come from the same person, suggesting manipulation.

that the sampling officer of the same sex can directly observe him or her providing the urine sample of about 100 ml into a "collecting vessel".

containers and breaks the security seals. He or she divides the specimen between the A and B bottle, with two-thirds going into the A bottle and the remaining third, at least 30 ml being poured into the B. The competitor then chooses two numbered seals to attach to the packs.

John Goodbody looks into past cases and methods used to avoid detection



Krabbe technically

THE ONE AND ONLY DANNY BAKER

Wales bids for FA Cup Final

THE FA Cup Final could be staged in Wales while Wembley is being rebuilt. Graham Walker, the commercial manager of the £137 million Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, confirmed last night that the stadium's administrators will be bidding to host the event.

O'Sullivan fails to maintain concentration

By PHIL YATES

DESPITE adopting a short-selection policy and generally carefree approach that was not in keeping with the importance of the occasion, Ronnie O'Sullivan led Jimmy White 10-6 entering the concluding session of their quarter-final in the Embassy world championship at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, yesterday.

joint-highest of the event so far, and 139 when play re-started yesterday.



White: recovery

O'Sullivan has abandoned convention throughout his career, but to play a frame as if it were an exhibition when leading only 9-6 at such an advanced stage of snooker's most important event is unfathomable.

White recovered to 8-4 by stealing one frame on the black, another on the brown and completing a 58 break, but he wasted the opportunity to add the thirteenth by grossly misjudging the last red.

launched by pots on reds that represented a significant risk, to move 13-11 ahead.

Yesterdays, Evans said: "There has been lots of speculation about this so the news comes as no surprise. But we should wait for the result of the B sample and the details of what's gone on here to make our final judgment."

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